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women in MUGHAL INDIA

rekha misra

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WOMEN IN MUGHAL INDIA

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(1526—1748 A.D.)

BY

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PREFACE

MUCH HAS been written about the different aspects of the political, social and economic life of the Mughal rule in India, but the women of that period have not been paid sufficient attention they deserved, by the students of History. The status of women in a country represents fairly the social spirit of the age. Hence, a survey of their position is needed.

In the present work an humble attempt has been made to depict the position of women—chiefly of aristocratic class of Mughal period. In a society where women live in seclusion, public references are avoided as far as possible. Consequently, the Chroniclers in Persian or Hindi rarely mention anything about them unless one played a very significant part in politics, literature or religion. After reading a good deal, one can get a few glimpses of them which give some idea about their position.

The scope of the present work has been limited mainly to the aristocratic women under the Mughals especially in Northern India, but some prominent women of that age belonging to the families of the nobles and others connected with the Mughals have also been taken into account. The various aspects of their lives—political, social and cultural has been dealt with. An attempt has also been made to include briefly the life of ordinary women of Hindu and Muslim communities of that time.

As regards the sources, main Persian sources and the accounts of the foreign travellers have been utilised. Besides them information has been drawn from the contemporary Hindi literature and some evidence has also been collected from the paintings. A number of modern works, articles in various journals and unpublished theses have also been consulted. A cursory glance of the bibliography will show the sources utilised for this book.

I am indebted to Messrs Munshiram Manoharlal for undertaking the publication of this book.

Allahabad,
October, 1967.

REKHA MISRA

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ain	Ain-i-Akbari (English Translation).
A.N.	Akbar Nama (English Translation).
Ashub	Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi by Muhammad Bakhsha Ashub.
Altekar	The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization by Dr. A.S. Altekar.
Ashraf	Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan.
Amal-i-Saleh	Amal-i-Saleh by Muhammad Saleh Kambu.
Adab	Adab-i-Alamgiri.
B.N.	Babur Nama (English Translation).
Badauni	Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh by Abdul Qadir Badauni (English Translation).
Bazm	Bazm-i-Taimuria.
Bev.	Beveridge.
Bernier	Travels in Mughal Empire by Bernier (English Translation).
Beni Prasad	History of Jahangir by Dr. B. Prasad.
De Laet	Empire of the Great Mughal by De Laet (English Translation).
Early Travels	Early Travels in India, Edited by W. Foster.
E. & D.	History of India As Told By Its Own Historians by Elliot and Dowson.
Ferishta	Tarikh-i-Ferishta by Hindu Shah Ferishta (English Translation).
Faruqi	Jahandar Nama of Nuruddin Faruqi.
Fryer	New Account of the East Indies and Persia by Fryer.
Hamilton	A New Account of the East Indies by Alexander Hamilton.

H.N.G.	Humayun Nama by Gulbadan Begam (English Translation).
Irvine	Later Mughals.
I.H.R.C.	Indian Historical Records Commission.
J.A.S.B.	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.B.O.R.S.	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
J.I.H.	Journal of Indian History.
Jafar	Education in Muslim India by S. M. Jafar.
K. Khan	Muntakhab-ul-lubab by Khafi Khan.
Kaumudi	Studies in Mughal Painting (Thesis) by Dr. Miss Kaumudi.
Kamwar	Tarikh-i-Salatin Chughtai by M. Kamwar.
Lahori	Padshah Nama by Abdul Hamid Lahori.
Law	Promotion of learning by N.N. Law.
Manrique	Travels of China and India by Fray Sebastien Manrique, Vol. II.
M.A.	Maasir-i-Alamgiri by Saqi Mustaid Khan (English Translation).
Maasir	Maasir-ul-Umara by Shah Nawaz Khan (English Translation).
Monserrate	The Commentarius by S.J. Monserrate (English Translation).
Manucci	Storia De Mogor by N. Manucci (English Translation).
P.I.H.C.	Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
p.	Page.
pp.	Pages.
Pelsaert	The Remonstrantie by F. Pelsaert.
Peter Mundy	Travels in Europe and Asia by Peter Mundy, Vol. II.
Pietra Della Valle	Travels of Pietra Della Valle in India.
Pant	Commercial Policy of the Mughals.
Purchas	Purchas and His Pilgrims.
Qazwini	Badshah Nama by Qazwini.
Qureshi	Administration of the Sultans of Delhi.

Ruqqat	Ruqqat-i-Alamgiri.
R. & B.	Rogers and Beveridge.
Stchoukine	La Peinture Indiennie A.L. epogue Des Grands Mughals by Ivan Stchoukine.
Shustry	Outlines of Islamic Culture by Shustry.
Sarkar	History of Aurangzeb by J.N. Sarkar.
Sarkar, Studies	Studies in Mughal India by J.N. Sarkar.
Shivaji	Shivaji and His Times by J.N. Sarkar.
Sardesai	New History of the Marathas.
S. Chandra	Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court (1707-1740) by Satish Chandra.
Siyar	Siyar ul-Mutaakhirin by Ghulam Taba Tabai.
Sinha	Madhyakaleen Hindi Kavitriyan by S. Sinha.
Tabqat	Tabqat-i-Akbari by Nizamuddin Ahmad (English Translation).
Tuzuk	Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (English Translation) by Rogers and Beveridge.
Waris	Badshah Nama by Waris.

1

POSITION OF WOMEN BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE MUGHALS

WOMAN ALONG with man, from time immemorial, has formed an integral part of social structure. Her role in the various walks of life has contributed to the evolution of values which have counted for, what may be described, all round progress. Her status is the measuring yard for assessing the standard of culture of any age or clime.

To have a vivid idea of the position of women in the Mughal period it is necessary to have a brief survey of the role they played in the preceding ages in India.

In the ancient period women wielded considerable influence in society and played significant role in various walks of life. They helped their husbands with their wise counsel in moments of crises; they did not hesitate even to take up arms to protect the life of their family and honour of their country. Since the ancient times there are instances of dowager queens successfully ruling their kingdom. In the early medieval age, during the time of Harsha, his sister Rajyashri, after the death of her husband occupied a seat of honour by the side of her brothers and also participated in state deliberations.[1] Even in the Rajput period administrative training was imparted to promising girls of ruling families.[2]

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[1] *Harshavardhan* by G.S. Chatterji, p. 87; *The Wonder That Was India* by A.L. Basham, p. 91.

[2] Vijaya Bhattarika of Chalukya House (Seventh century A.D.), Sugandha and Didda of Kashmir (Tenth century A.D.) managed their

[*Contd. on next page*

So far as the role of women in court life is concerned, they were employed in royal palaces as personal attendants, door-keepers or even as armed guards. In the time of Harsha women guards, called Pratiharis, regulated entry into the palace proclaiming loudly the arrival of the visitor. They held the golden pitcher, royal umbrella and waved '*Chuuri*'. They also served as 'betel-carriers' and 'flower-bearers'.[1] The royal kitchen and wine-cellars were usually managed by them. They rode on elephants and chariots and accompanied the king on hunting excursions.[2] On ceremonial occasions and during festivals female attendants of the palace participated in music and dance. They were also used as spies and were often used for the purpose of poisoning the enemy.[3]

In the ancient period, the existence of *parda* though not very common, cannot be completely denied.[4] It was particularly observed among the aristocracy. In religious matters women enjoyed status equal to that of men.[5] They participated in rituals, sacrifices, and other religious rites organized by their husbands. Many of them joined Buddhist monasteries and became Bhikhshunis (nuns).[6]

Contd. from previous page]

states fairly successfully. *The Position of Woman in Hindu Civilization* by A.S. Altekar, pp. 21 and 187.

When her husband Samarasi along with Prithviraj died in battlefield in 1193 A.D. Kurmadevi took the administration of Mewar in her hands and repulsed the attacks of Qutubuddin. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* by Tod, Vol. I, pp. 303-4 ; Altekar, p. 187.

[1] Altekar, p. 182 ; Journal of Indian History, Vol. 17 (1938), p. 24.

[2] *Life in Gupta Age* by R.N. Saletore, p. 182.

[3] Reference of Vish-kanyas or pretty girls used for the purpose of poisoning the enemies was usually found. *History of Medieval India* by C.V. Vaidya, Vol. I. p. 6.

[4] Reference to seclusion of women is made in Arthashastra. Arthashastra by Kautilya, Tr. p. 188 ; Abhigyan Shakuntalam by Kalidasa, Tr. p. 327 ; Harsha Charit by Bana, Act One, Scene Three ; *The Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan* by Ashraf, p. 245.

[5] *Hindu Social Organization* by P.N. Prabhu, pp. 257-8 ; *The Wonder That Was India* by Basham, p. 178; Journal of Indian History, Vol. 17 (1938), p. 25.

[6] Rajyashri was interested in the principle and philosophy of Buddhism. *Harshavardhan* by G.S. Chatterji. p. 308; *Shri Harsha* by R.K. Mukerji, pp. 193-4.

In the field of learning also, women enjoyed a very respectable position.[1] Many ladies distinguished themselves as teachers and debators.[2] The interest of women in the field of scholarship continued even in the early medieval period.[3] Among the many Sanskrit poetesses who flourished during this period (600-1200 A.D.) reference may be made of Indralekha, Sheela and Subhadra.[4] Some girls took interest in Mathematics also.[5] The study of fine arts used to be the special interest of women. The ladies, especially of higher classes, distinguished themselves in fine arts such as painting, music, dance and decoration.[6]

Women spent their leisure in various hobbies and pastimes. Music and dancing were the main items of their recreation. Games such as hide-and-seek and run-and-catch, which could be played in the courtyard, were fairly common.[7] Girls used

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[1] There were two types of educated women, *Sadyodwahas* and *Brahmanadins.* The former pursued studies till marriage while the latter pursued them throughout their lives. *Great Women of India* by Madhavanand and Majumdar, p. 5.

[2] In the Brahma-Upanishad period, women like Sulabha, Gargi and Maitreyi took interest in philosophic studies. *Great Women of India* by Madhavanand and Majumdar, p. 30; *Hindu Social Organization* by P.N. Prabhu, p. 264.

[3] Bana has recorded that Divakar Misra was appointed to teach the principles of Buddhism to Rajyashri. *Shri Harsha* by R.K. Mukerji, p. 176. The learned wife of Mandan Misra defeated Shankaracharya in debate. Avanti Sundari, the wife of the famous poet Rajsekhar, was also very learned. *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by G.H. Ojha, pp. 52-3.

[4] *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 53.

[5] Bhaskaracharya wrote Lilawati to teach the subject to his daughter. *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 53.

[6] Rajyashri, the sister of King Harsha, was given sufficient training in the art of music and dance. *Harshavardhan* by G.S. Chatterji, p. 308; *Shri Harsha* by R.K. Mukerji, pp. 193-4 ; *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 53; *The Wonder That Was India* by Basham, p. 179.

The famous Sanskrit poet Kalidasa also reforms to the art of dancing practised by ladies. Malavikagnimitra by Kalidasa, Tr. pp. 2 and 41.

In Harsha's *Ratnavali* the Rani is described as painting a coloured picture with brush which indicates that the art of painting was a favourite pastime of the ladies of royalty and nobility. *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 53.

[7] Altekar, pp. 15-16.

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to go out for swimming as well. In addition to these they enjoyed themselves in gardening, garland-making, toy-making and house decoration.[1] These means of recreation appear to have continued till the Rajput period. The apartment of ladies contained spacious courtyards, gardens and playgrounds.[2] Rajput ladies continued the ancient custom of accompanying their husbands in hunting expeditions, battlefields and they also joined their husbands on the occasion of religious ceremonies.[3]

In the early medieval period women had started wearing *Sari* and they covered the upper part of their body with *Angiya* (bodice). They used a long *Dupatta* or *Odhani* (scarf) of different types when they moved out of their houses.[4] In the Northern and Western India *Lahanga* (long skirt) was often worn by ladies. Reference is also made of *Kanchuk* and *Choli* (blouse) used by women. They changed their dresses according to the changing seasons.[5] In summer they preferred light clothes made of fine texture. They were particularly fond of coloured and printed dresses.[6]

Ornaments were fairly popular among Indian women. They adorned themselves with flowers and jewels. The ornaments commonly used were *Shishphul* or *Sikhapasa* (worn on forehead), earrings, bangles, bracelets, rings, waist-belt, *Payal*, etc.[7] It appears that nose-ring was unknown throughout the Hindu period.[8] The ornaments were usually made of gold, silver and various precious stones.[9] Even poor women used ornaments made generally of ivory, brass and glass.[10]

Besides ornaments women paid great attention to their toilet. They used cosmetics and unguents of various kinds such as sandal paste mixed with saffron.[11] They plaited their hair in

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[1] *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* by Kalidasa, Tr. p. 44; Altekar, p. 20.

[2] *Rajputane Ka Itihas* by Ojha, Vol. I, p. 77.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[4] *Bhartiya Vesh Bhusha* by Moti Chandra, pp. 69 and 81.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 158-9.

[6] *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 43.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 44; Altekar, pp. 298-9.

[8] Altekar, p. 302.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 298.

[10] *The Wonder That Was India* by Basham, p. 212.

[11] Altekar, p. 300.

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different styles and used flowers and ornaments to decorate them.[1] Hair was combed in broad plaits or loose tresses. The most popular coiffure amongst women was a large bun at the neck in which they often used strings of jewels.[2] They applied collyrium in their eyes, vermilion on forehead and also decorated their face.[3] On lips, on the tips of their fingers, toes and palm etc., different types of dyes and ointments were used.[4]

In the economic sphere the husband and wife were the joint-owners of household and its property. At the time of marriage the husband had to take a vow that he would not impugn upon the interest of his wife in economic matters. The theory of joint-ownership helped the wife in securing minor rights though not absolute equality. There is no reference to women's inheriting property though they had claims upon what is called '*Stridhan*' which included ornaments, costly dresses, utensils etc.[5]

As regards the women of lower classes, they helped their husbands in various spheres. They took an active part in agriculture.[6] They used to make war-materials such as bows and arrows. They also engaged themselves in weaving, embroidery and basket-making.[7] Some of them were employed in royal palaces.[8]

Thus, on the whole, in Indian society of the pre-Turkish period, the position of women was not altogether disappointing. Though the rights of freedom and honour enjoyed by women in the ancient period gradually dwindled in the social sphere, yet what remained with them was not altogether insignificant.

When the Turks came to India they brought their own heritage which they derived from the Arabs and the Abbasids. Among them women seem to occupy a respectable position. They took active part in politics. Seclusion was not practised

[1] *Madhyakaleen Bhartiya Sanskriti* by Ojha, p. 44.

[2] *The Wonder That Was India* by Basham, p. 211.

[3] Altekar, p. 300.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 300; *The Wonder That Was India* by Basham, p. 212.

[5] Altekar, pp. 214-17.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 182; Journal of Indian History, Vol. 17 (1938), p. 24.

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strictly in the beginning but started growing rigid after the tenth century. Some of the ladies took keen interest in intellectual sphere, but it appears that they were not much encouraged in the sphere of religion. The field of fine arts specially attracted their attention and the art of music and dance was fairly popular. Some of them became the leaders of fashion. Even amidst the great turmoil which was taking place in Western Asia during the eleventh century, women continued to be an object of care, adoration and chivalry. These traditions, customs and practices, which were brought into this country by the Turks, were followed by the royalty, nobility and the Turkish soldiers and in course of time went through modifications and changes under the impact of indigenous conditions.

The Sultans of Delhi had large harems and a considerable part of their time was spent in the company of their wives and concubines. Besides their mothers and sisters, other relations of the family were also included in the harem. The mother of the Sultan was respected most and only next to her was the chief wife. In accordance with the Rajput and Persian tradition the mother possessed a more domineering position than a consort. Some of these royal ladies enjoyed high prestige and were also given high titles such as *Malka-i-Jahan*, *Makh-dumah-i-Jahan* etc.[1]

Some ambitious ladies of royalty were attracted to politics as well. In the Sultanate period the first instance of a royal lady interfering in contemporary political matters is offered by Shah Turkan, the wife of Iltutmish and mother of Ruknuddin Firoz. She was a very ambitious lady. Though Iltutmish had already expressed his desire to make Razia his successor, yet Shah Turkan decided to interfere in the political arrangement. Immediately after the death of her husband (1236 A.D.) she manipulated to put her indolent and pleasure-loving son Ruknuddin Firoz on the throne, and started concentrating all political authority in her own hands.[2] To fulfil her ambitions she put to death many of the inmates of the harem and even

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[1] *Administration of the Sultans of Delhi* by I.H. Qureshi, p. 65.

[2] Minhaj-us-Siraj says,"Shah Turkan began to assume the decision and disposal of state affairs and used to issue commands." *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, Tr. Vol. I, p. 632.

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conspired against Razia. Later on she was overpowered and imprisoned by the nobles ; her plans failed.

The next example of a lady taking active part in politics is that of Razia. By her talents and accomplishments she had so much impressed her father, Iltutmish, that after the death of his eldest son prince Nasiruddin Mahmud in 1229 A.D., Iltutmish had decided to declare Razia as his successor in preference to his sons, namely, Ruknuddin Firoz, Muizuddin Bahram and Nasiruddin Mahmud. The claims of Razia to the throne were based on her competence and her experience in the management of the administration of the Sultanate. Iltutmish had made all efforts to give her proper training in matters of administration and equip her well for the task which he had assigned to her.[1] In 1231 A.D., when he left the capital on an expedition against Gwalior, he put Razia in charge of administration at Delhi[2] and she acquitted herself very creditably.

With the nomination of Razia as heir-apparent, a ticklish question arose in theory and practice of Islamic polity. The right of the females to enjoy sovereign power was familiar to the Persians; it was new to India.[3] From the time the Turks had established their ascendancy over Islamic world no objections had been raised against the right of females to enjoy the sovereignty. It seems that the Turks had fully assimilated political traditions of the Persians and had also accepted the right of females to sovereignty. On his return from Gwalior, when Iltutmish asked his Prime Minister Tajul-Mulk to write a decree nominating Razia as his heir-apparent,[4] some courtiers represented that in the presence of grown-up sons, there was no need to nominate a daughter as successor to the throne; but no constitutional objections were raised, nor did any

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[1] *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj, Tr. Vol. I, pp. 637-38.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 637-38; *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by A.B.M. Habibullah, p. 107.

[3] In Persia Puren Dukht and Arjumand Dukht, daughters of Khusuru Perveiz of Sassanid Dynasty, ascended the throne in early seventh century and ruled successfully. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. 11 (1940), p. 753 ('Sultan Razia' by A.B.M. Habibullah).

[4] *Tabqat-i-Nosiri* by Minhaj-us Siraj, Tr. Vol I, p. 638.

Muslim jurist questioned the legality of such a proposal.[1] It might be that some of the nobles could not "reconcile with the idea of a woman ruling over them."[2] Their resentment seems to have been against the interference of females in the sphere of sovereignty which they seem to have considered their monopoly.

However, Razia took the advantage of incompetence and misrule of Ruknuddin Firoz and appealed to the people of Delhi and to the army at Delhi[3] to help her and restore her to the throne. After her ascendancy to the throne "all things returned to their usual rules and customs."[4] All those, who opposed her succession on one ground or the other, were imprisoned and she carried on her administration successfully for about four years (1236-40 A.D.).

Razia's accession to the throne is of great political significance in the history of the Sultanate of Delhi. It was for the first time that on the basis of sheer competence even the claim of a lady to the throne was honoured. Her accession to the throne made it clear that the highest positions—even that of a sovereign—were open to the females. It indicates the "freshness and the robustness of the Turkish mind in the thirteenth century",[5] which was ready to give full consideration to the merits of the individuals, irrespective of the differences in class and sex of the society. The example of Razia gradually became a source of inspiration and encouragement to the ladies of royalty to take active part in the field of politics.

After a gap of nearly half a century, another example of a lady of royal family taking active part in politics is found in Malika-i-Jahan, the wife of Jalaluddin and the mother of Ruknuddin Ibrahim, who was a very ambitious lady. By her domineering nature she made the domestic life of her son-in-law Alauddin so unhappy and miserable that he decided to leave the capital and went to Kara as Governor of that province in 1291 A.D. After the death of Jalaluddin in 1296 A.D. she made efforts to put her son on the throne and capture the political power in her own hands,[1] completely ignoring the claims of Jalaluddin's eldest son Arkali Khan, better known as *Rustam-i-Zaman*. She gradually captured all political power and started managing the administration by issuing royal orders.[2] It was on account of her growing political ambition that her relations with Arkali Khan were strained[3] and the latter refused to help her when Alauddin, taking advantage of the situation, attacked Ruknuddin Ibrahim. However, Malka-i-Jahan and her son were completely ousted and were forced to take shelter with Arkali Khan at Multan.

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[1] It is only in seventh century that Abdul Haq expressed his surprise at the conduct of jurists and Sheikhs in accepting Razia's accession to the throne. *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 29; *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* by A.B.M. Habibullah, p. 107.

[2] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 28.

[3] *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj, Tr. Vol. I, p. 636.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 639.

[5] *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 29.

The reign of Alauddin did not allow much scope either to nobles or to the ladies to exercise much influence in politics because the Sultan himself was a very strong autocrat.[4] Yet there are some examples when he was influenced by the ladies of the harem while taking some important political decisions.[5]

The Tughlaqs also had great regard for the ladies. Muhammad Tughlaq had so much respect and devotion for her mother[6] that he allowed her to exercise influence in matters of state. It appears that she enjoyed precedence over the queens of the Sultan. At the death of Muhammad Tughlaq an attempt was made by his sister Khudavandzada to place her son Dawar Bakhsh on the throne.[7] The nobles had already decided in favour of Firoz Tughlaq who was present at Thatta where Muhammad Tughlaq died. Yet she pressed the claims of her sons, and it is alleged that she even conspired to murder Firoz.[8] However, her efforts did not succeed.

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[1] *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Barani (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 39.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *History of the Khalji* by K.S. Lal, p. 307.

[5] His wife, Kamla Devi, importuned him to recover her daughter from the hands of Rai Karan which led to the invasion of Gujrat and Baglana. *Deval Rani Khizr Khan* by Amir Khusru (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 172.

[6] *Ibn Batuta* (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Vol. I), p. 234; *History of Qaraunah Turks in India* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 310.

[7] *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Afif (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Vol. II), p. 56.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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Even in the period of Lodis the examples are not wanting of women exercising considerable influence in contemporary politics. In the conflict between Bahlol Lodi and the Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur a number of royal ladies of Jaunpur interfered in political matters. The wife of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur, who was the daughter of Sayyid ruler Sultan Alauddin, was a very ambitious lady and wanted to avenge the defeat of her father at the hands of Bahlol by driving the latter away from Delhi.[1] She instigated her husband to march against Bahlol. Sultan Mahmud Sharqi laid siege to the citadel of Delhi which, in the absence of Bahlol Lodi, was defended by the Afghans under the leadership of Bibi Mattu, the widow of Islam Khan.[2]

The mother of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi, namely, Bibi Razi, was also a very 'sagacious, wise and gifted woman'.[3] After the death of Sultan Mahmud she secured the help of the Amirs and placed Prince Bhikhan on the throne. She also succeeded in settling the dispute regarding territories held by Sharqi ruler and Bahlol Lodi.[4] She exercised considerable influence in the politics of Jaunpur and was responsible for the succession of Prince Husain to the throne.[5]

Malika-i-Jahan, the queen of Husain Shah, the last ruler of Sharqi dynasty also interfered in contemporary politics. She instigated her husband to march against Sultan Bahlol in spite of a treaty between the two.[6]

The ladies of the Lodi harem were no less active in politics. Shams Khatun, the chief queen of Bahlol Lodi, insisted on her husband not to relax till her brother, Qutb Khan, who was imprisoned by Sultan Muhammad Sharqi was not released.[7] Bibi Ambha,[8] the Hindu wife of Sultan Bahlol and the mother of Nizam Khan, later known as Sikander Lodi, was an equally ambitious lady. After the death of her husband, she found that the claims of her son Nizam Khan to the throne were challenged by one Isa Khan, the nephew of Bahlol Lodi, on the basis that the former was born of a Hindu mother. Bibi Ambha succeeded in securing the support of a group of Afghan nobles under Khan-i-Khanan Nubani and "ably pressed the claims of her son."[1] She "addressed the assembly from behind a curtain in favour of her son",[2] and ultimately succeeded in putting him on the throne.

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[1] *Makhzan-i-Afghana* by Niamatullah, Tr. p. 36.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 37; *Tabqat*, Vol. I, p. 342; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 555.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 37; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 555; *Tabqat*, Vol. I, p. 342.

[5] *Makhzan-i-Afghana* by Niamatullah, Tr. p. 45.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 38; *Tabqat*, Vol. I, p. 343; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 555.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 24; *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 563, says that her name was

Thus, even during the Lodi period the practice of the ladies of royal family taking active interest in politics continued unabated.

The harem of the Turkish and Lodi Sultans of Delhi was not so elaborate an institution as it developed in the times of the Mughals. It comprised usually of the ladies of royalty, their dependants, domestic servants, maids, slaves and eunuchs etc., who used to attend upon and look after them. The Sultan was deemed to be the head, and all the members of the harem were under his direct command. The inmates were assigned 'enclosed and well-guarded lodgings' inside the palace.[3] Even inside the harem *parda* was observed.[4] The internal management of the harem was supervised by a '*Hakima*' or governess who usually belonged to a noble family.[5] In addition to it, '*Khawaja Sara*' were entrusted with the task of supervising and protecting the harem from without.[6] This office was of great responsibility and was assigned to specially competent and reliable persons.

During the Sultanate period Hindu ladies also entered the harem. Alauddin's marriage with Kamla Devi, the wife of Rai Karan Baghela of Gujrat, and her entry into the harem provides first example of this practice.[7] It was followed by similar marriages of Sultans or Princes with Hindu ladies. It is said that Alauddin married the daughter of Ram Chandra Dev too.[1] He married his son Khizr Khan to Deval Devi, the daughter of Rai Karan.[2] Firoz Tughlaq was born of a Rajput lady.[3] Even Sikander Lodi's mother was a Hindu lady.[4] But the entrance of these ladies into the harem did not make any outstanding contribution. It suggests that their individuality was suppressed and they were not allowed to exert influence in any sphere. The Sultans had not yet learnt to appreciate the importance of a composite culture.

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[1] *Makhzan-i-Afghana* by Niamatullah, Tr. p. 24.

[2] *Ferishta*, Vol. I, p. 563.

[3] *Administration of the Sultans of Delhi* by Qureshi, p. 150.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] The wife of Nizamuddin held this post in the time of Kaiqubad. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Barani (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 218.

[6] *Administration of the Sultans of Delhi* by Qureshi, p. 150.

[7] *Deval Rani Khizr Khan* by Amir Khusru (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 172.

Some ladies of royalty were known for their liberality and philanthropy. Shah Turkan was famous for her benevolence and patronage of learning.[5] Muhammad Tughlaq's mother was also known for her liberality and through it she acquired a high social status. She gave grand receptions to foreign visitors and offered them valuable gifts.[6] On her behalf gifts were also sent to learned scholars. She was very fond of giving charity and built many *Khankahs* where food was distributed free to travellers.[7]

In intellectual field also women made a mark for themselves. Razia's accomplishments prove that the Turkish royalty did not neglect the education of their daughters. She was well versed and composed verses. Although female education was restricted due to *parda* system, yet there is no doubt that young girls were taught in schools.[8] Boys and girls received education together till primary standard after which girls were privately educated or sent to schools which were specially meant for them.[9] Girls often went to schools maintained in private houses.[10]

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[1] *Futuh-us-Salatin* by Isami (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 173.

[2] *Deval Rani Khizr Khan* by Amir Khusru (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 173.

[3] *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Afif (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Vol. II), p. 54.

[4] *Makhzan-i-Afghana* by Niamatullah, Tr. p. 24.

[5] *Tabqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj-us-Siraj, Tr. Vol. I, p. 631.

[6] *Ibn Batuta* (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Vol. I), p. 166.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

[8] *Promotion of Learning in India* by N.N. Law, p. 201.

[9] *Education in Muslim India* by Jafar, p. 85.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Sometimes Muslim widows used to teach Quran to them. Girls of higher classes received education in their own houses from learned ladies or old men who served as private tutors.[1] *Maktab* ceremony was performed for both boys and girls and they were also given *Idi* alike.[2] It is alleged that one of the reasons why Muhammad Tughlaq attacked Qarajal hill was the desire to possess the women of that country who were famous for their talents and accomplishments.[3] In the seraglio of Sultan Ghiyas Uddin Khilji of Malwa (1469-1500 A.D.) many school mistresses, musicians, women to read prayers, lived[4] which proves that he gave special attention to the education of women. The accomplishments of Deval Bani indicate that Hindu rulers were equally keen to educate their daughters.[5]

Besides learning, women were also fond of music and dancing. Two famous women singers of Jalaluddin Khilji's reign were Fatuha and Nusrat Khatun.[6] They had melodiously sweet voice and were well trained in the art. Dukhtar Khasa, Nusrat Bibi and Mehr Afroz were expert in dancing.[7] Women used to play an instrument known as *Tal*.[8] They used to wear it round their fingers. It was through music that they used to charm people. On ceremonious occasions ladies used to perform dances.[9] Thus the ladies regularly practised the arts of music and dance and enriched the cultural life of the royalty and the society.

As for dresses, two varieties of dresses were used by Hindu women. One consisted of a long *Chadar* of fine sheet of muslin (like the modern sari), a *Choli* (blouse) with short sleeves and a dark coloured *Angiya* (bodice) for grown-up girls or married ladies. The other type of dress consisted of a *Lahanga* (long loose skirt), a *Choli* and *Angiya* with a *Rupatia* (long scarf).[1] The latter was very popular in the Doab. Muslim ladies wore loose drawers, a skirt, and a long scarf.[2] In addition to this, they used a veil. In daily use women avoided blue colour because it was the colour of mourning. Bright colours and prints were preferred by ladies. Thus it appears that no marked change took place in the dresses of the ladies in this period.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[2] *Idi* was generally a verse relating to the *Id* or a blessing for the girls on a coloured paper when a girl commenced her studies in a *Maktab*. At that time she was made to read that paper before her parents and they gave rich presents to the teacher. It is also known as *Maktab* ceremony. (Jafar, pp. 190-1; Law, p. 200).

[3] *History of Qaraunah Turks in India* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 132.

[4] *Ferishta*, Vol. IV, p. 236; Law, p. 201.

[5] *Ashraf*, p. 243.

[6] *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Barani (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 16.

[7] According to Barani whosoever saw their dances was enchanted. See, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Barani (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 16.

[8] *Deval Rani Khizr Khan* by Amir Khusru (Khilji Kaleen Bharat), p. 173.

[9] *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Afif (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Part II), p. 144.

Women in India were always fond of ornaments. They formed one of the important items of their adornment. Ornaments signified *Suhag* (married life) to an Indian woman, and a widow had to cast them away. Varied types of ornaments were used from the head to toe. Some of them are *Shishphul* (for forehead), *Jhumar* (for head), earring, necklace, bangles, armlets, bracelets, rings, waist-belt and *Payal* (for feet). One ornament which was introduced in this period was nose-ring. It seems that it was borrowed from the Muhammedans.[3] The shape and design of the ornaments used by Muslim and Hindu ladies might have differed from each other but basically they remained the same.

Besides ornaments, ladies spent much of their time in toilet. Sandal paste, musk and scented oils were used by them. In Gujrat and in the South, ladies anointed themselves with various pastes. Due attention was paid to the dressing of the hair. The articles of decoration consisted of collyrium for eye, certain black powder for eye-brows, musk for breast, henna for hands and feet and betel for lips.[4] It seems that the articles of toilet continued to be the same as in the early period.

So far as women of lower strata are concerned, no information is available about them. It seems they followed the footsteps of women of higher classes.[5] But this much is evident that with the advent of Muslims, due to the insecurity and

[1] Ashraf, p. 278.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Altekar, p. 302.

[4] Ashraf, p. 280.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

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uncertainty which prevailed, the position of common women further received a set-back. *Parda* became more rigid, child marriages were fairly common, and *Jauhar* and *Sati*[1], which were practised in Hindu society, became more popular. Sometimes even the Muslim women preferred *Jauhar*.[2] Firoz Tughlaq and Sikander Lodi restricted the freedom of women by forbidding their visit to holy shrines. With all these restrictions it is clear that the lot of women was not very happy.

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[1] Ashraf, pp. 256, 261; Ibn Batuta also refers to it. (Tughlaq Kaleen Bharat Part I) , p. 172.

[2] During Timur's invasion when Bhatner was sacked Muslim women performed *Jauhar*. *Tuzuk-i-Taimuri* (E. & D. Vol. III), p. 426.

2

WOMEN AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS-I

(1526 A.D.—1627 A.D.)

ON ACCOUNT of the scarcity of any positive information, it is difficult to determine the rights, the Turk-Mongol women enjoyed in politics. The only thing that can be said with some certainty is that among both, the Mughals and the Turks, the women did enjoy some political privileges. The position of widow was of great importance when a man died leaving his children still in infancy. The widow assumed all the rights of her husband, including even the leadership of the tribe, until such time as her children grew to manhood and married. There are instances enough to prove that the women were allowed to act as regents.[1]

Among the Timurides as well as the family of Chingiz Khan women used to accompany their husbands to the war-fields.[2] They not only looked after the comforts of the warriors but also took active part in the actual fight. In the army of Timur there were, "Many women who mingled in the melee of battle and in fierce conflicts and strove with men and fought with brave warriors and overcame mighty heroes in combat with the thrust of the spear, the blow of the sword, and shooting of arrows."[3]

In India the Turks, who had fully assimilated political traditions of the Persians and had accepted the right of females to sovereignty, had already raised a lady, Razia, to the throne and, thereby, had taken a very progressive step. The example of Razia encouraged the ladies of royalty to take active part in politics. This practice continued throughout the Turkish rule in India and even the Afghans seem to have allowed their ladies to have some say in political matters.

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[1] *Chingiz Khan* by Ralph Fox, p. 44.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[1] *Tamerlane* Tr. by J.H. Sanders, p. 324.

The family of Babur which inherited the traditions of Chingiz and Timur allowed their females sufficient political rights and thus enabled them to take active part in politics. But they do not seem to have conceded to them the right of sovereignty.[1] In 1494 A.D., when Umar Shaikh Mirza died, Babur was hardly about eleven years of age and was confronted with two powerful armies within the borders of Farghana. At this critical stage he was ably assisted by his grandmother, Ehsan Daulat Begam, 'whose prudent advice was responsible for much of his success.' She acted as the real head of affairs, looked after the immediate administrative problems and managed the situation so tactfully that even in such a critical situation Babur did not suffer much.[2] Not only that, five or six months later when Hasan, one of his officers, organized a conspiracy to dethrone Babur, it was Ehsan Daulat Begam again who accepted the challenge, organized the loyal officers and with their co-operation succeeded in arresting the conspirators and thus solving the situation.[3] She was a wise and far-sighted lady and rendered valuable help to Babur in running the administration of his State.[4]

The active role played by Ehsan Daulat Begam in contemporary politics was not an exception in the Mughal family. Babur's mother and his wives also contributed, according to their own personal capacities, to the solution of various complicated political problems. His mother, Qutluq Nigar

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[1] Once Shah Begam of Badakhshan wrote to Babur that she, being a woman, could not attain sovereignty while her grandson (Mirza Khan) could hold it. *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 109.

[2] *An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century* by Rushbrook Williams, p. 34.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

[4] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 43. About his grandmother Babur writes: "Few amongst women will have been my grandmother's equal for judgment and counsel. She was very wise and farsighted and most affairs of mine were carried through under her advice."

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Khanum, always accompanied him in his wars and wanderings.[1] But a more active role was played by his Shia wife Mahim Begam, who was related to Sultan Husain Baiqara and was married to Babur in 1506 A.D. She accompanied her husband to Badakhshan and Transoxiana and stood by him through thick and thin.[2] She enjoyed exalted position in the time of Babur and was the only queen who was allowed to sit by the side of the king on the throne at Delhi.[3] For two and a half years after the death of her husband she continued taking an active interest in the contemporary politics.[4]

Babur's another wife who helped him in solving some of his political problems was Bibi Mubarika whom he married in

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[1] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 21. About her Babur writes : "She was with me on most of my guerilla expeditions and throneless time. . . . Few of her sex excelled her in sense and sagacity."

[2] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 358.

[3] *A.N.*, p. 114; *Humayun Badshah* by S.K. Banerji, Vol. I, p. 60.

[4] *Humayun Badshah* by S.K. Banerji, Vol. II, p. 314. But Prof. R. Williams is of the opinion that Mahim Begam took an active part and helped Humayun in solving the problem created by the conspiracy of Nizamuddin Khalifa to put Mahdi Khwaja on the throne, setting aside the claims of Humayun. According to him, in 1529 A.D. Humayun received the news of Khalifa's activities in Badakhshan. There is strong evidence that it was his mother, Mahim, then journeying in leisurely fashion from Kabul to join her husband in Agra, who bade him return; and it is natural to suppose that she did so because she had somehow obtained intelligence of the plot to set him aside. (R. Williams, pp. 171-172). But Dr. Ishwari Prasad does not agree with this view. According to him, it is difficult to accept the view that she obtained intelligence of the plot while travelling through Etawah district. The intrigue does not seem to have begun while Humayun was at Badakhshan. Nor does it appear that Mahim was apprised of it in the Etawah district. According to *Babur Nama*, the earliest that she must have reached Etawah would be June 24, 1529. If she had learnt of the conspiracy about this time it would not have been possible for her to inform Humayun in distant Badakhshan of the Khalifa's plan so as to enable him to reach Agra on or before July 7, 1529. The offerings of Mahim and Humayun were presented to Emperor in Agra on July 7. Thus it is clear that Mahim had, at her disposal, only 13 or 14 days during which she could send a message to Humayun in Badakhshan asking him to come to the capital at once. A fortnight or so was insufficient for a journey from Etawah to Badakhshan and back to Agra. (*Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, pp. 33-34). This makes it clear that Mahim Begam could not possibly take any part in this affair.

Afghanistan in 1519 A.D. Bibi Mubarika, the daughter of Malik Sulaiman Shah belonged to the Yusufzai tribe of the Afghans, who were the most troublesome of all the tribes. She helped Babur considerably in lessening the tension between the Afghans and him, by conciliating the Yusufzais and their chief, Malik Shah Mansur, in particular, and the Afghans in general. She strengthened Babur's hold in Afghanistan.[1]

In the reign of Humayun, the first lady who occupied an important position in the harem was Khanzada Begam, the eldest sister of Babur. After the death of Mahim Begam, the Shia wife of Babur, in 1532-33 A.D., she was raised to the status of the principal lady of the palace and was given the title of *Padshah Begam.*[2] Humayun had great faith in her and always consulted her in solving the complicated problems of the family. She was always addressed by Gulbadan Begam, the sister of Humayun, as the "Dearest Lady."[3] In 1541 A.D., when Humayun was moving towards Thatta, he learnt that Hindal had occupied Qandhar at the instance of Qaracha Khan, the Governor of Qandhar, and Kamran had marched against him to recover Qandhar from him. He was greatly disturbed at the news of this fraternal discord and requested his aunt, Khanzada Begam, to go to Qandhar, intervene in this matter and try to bring a reconciliation between the two brothers. Khanzada Begam went there but could not succeed in her mission.[4] In 1545 A.D., when Humayun returned from Iran and laid siege to the fort of Qandhar, Kamran found himself in difficulty. He sent Khanzada to Askari, who was in charge of the fort, with a secret instruction to hold out the fort till the arrival of Kamran. But Askari could not resist the forces of Humayun. The fall of the fort became obvious. As such, according to the instructions of Kamran, Askari sent Khanzada Begam to negotiate peace with Humayun. Though she pleaded for a mild treatment to Askari and Kamran, Humayun, bitter as he was, could not oblige her. The matter had not yet been finally settled when she fell seriously ill and breathed her last in September 1545 A.D.

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[1] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 375; *Humayun Badshah* by S.K. Banerji, Vol. II, p. 322.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 314-15.

[3] *G.H N.* (Bev.), p. 103.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 160-61; *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 222.

During the last twelve years of her life as the principal lady of the harem, Khanzada Begam took fairly keen interest in the political affairs and wielded considerable influence on Huma un and his brothers. Within her own limits, she tried to help Humayun during his days of misery and adversity.

Except Khanzada Begam, there does not seem to be any other lady who had played any significant role in the contemporary politics during the reign of Humayun. But there were some ladies outside the imperial harem who took active interest in political matters. One such lady was Haram Begam, daughter of Mir Wais Beg[1] and wife of Humayun's cousin, Sulaiman Mirza.[2] She enjoyed the title of *Wali-Niamet* (lady of beneficence).[3] She was an ambitious lady, possessed administrative ability and often dominated her husband and her son Mirza Ibrahim who always consulted her in state matters.[4]

The first instance of an active role played by Haram Begam in contemporary politics is noticed in 1549 A.D. when Humayun had started from Kabul on an expedition to Balkh. In response to his call for help, Haram Begam, at a very short notice, collected a strong army, led them to a considerable distance, and then ordered them to proceed posthaste to join the exiled Emperor and help him in his expedition.[5]

In 1551 A.D., when Humayun was planning an expedition to India, she came to Kabul[6] with the ostensible purpose of joining the condolence at the death of Mirza Hindal, but in reality with a view to get away from her home on account of some domestic discord.[7] Her husband and son reconciled

[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 40.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[4] Abul Fazl says, "Without her (Haram Begam) concurrence, he (Sulaiman Mirza) could not conduct any state business, and whom, he, out of weakness, had made ruler over himself . . ." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 39.

[5] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 195; *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 308.

[6] *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 223.

[7] Ambitious as she was, Haram Begam, by her ability and planning,

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her and persuaded her to return; but during her stay at Kabul she studied carefully the political situation there and was attracted by an opportunity to get possession of Kabul. She persuaded Mirza Sulaiman to take up the conquest of Kabul which was, under the circumstances, an easy undertaking; but her plan fell through.[1] On the death of Humayun, Mirza Sulaiman, encouraged by his wife, Haram Begam, again made frantic efforts to occupy Kabul, but he could not succeed.[2]

Ten years later, in 1566 A.D. she played a very interesting role in the politics of Kabul. Finding Kabul unprotected, she encouraged her husband Mirza Sulaiman to make a fourth attempt at Kabul. Mirza Hakim had entrusted the fort of Kabul to Masum and had retired to Ghorband. Haram Begam directed her husband to besiege the fort of Kabul while she herself approached the young prince through her messengers and tried to cajole him by sweet words and assurances and requested him to meet her at Qarabagh at a distance of twenty-four miles from Kabul. She had a secret plan to entice away the prince and get him arrested at Qarabagh. Unfortunately for her, one of her attendants joined Mirza Hakim. The secret leaked out and Mirza Hakim, who had already started for Qarabagh, turned back and returned posthaste for his safety.[3] This incident shows the cleverness and astute diplomacy of Haram Begam.

The intense desire of Haram Begam to take active part in politics incited her to take interest in the administration of Badakhshan which was placed under her husband. She showed dexterity and skill in the administration of the kingdom and in the management of the army. She wielded so much influence

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managed the political and financial affairs of Bedakhshan with the help of a group of favourite nobles. Those who were dissatisfied, made a mischievous allegation that there was a criminal intimacy between her and her brother Haider Beg. When this rumour reached her son, Mirza Ibrahim, he put Haider to death. The Begam was highly displeased at this and left home for Kabul, but apparently giving out that she was determined on a pilgrimage to Mecca. *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 40-41.

[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 407-9.

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that Mirza Sulaiman conferred upon her the right of inflicting punishments which she exercised with great severity.[1] She also interfered in the administration of Kulab but could not get much success.[2] She was a lady of virile and upright character and commanded awe and respect of not only the nobility but also of the princes of royal family.[3]

In addition to the ladies of the Mughal family, there were some other ladies who were fairly well-known in contemporary politics during the reign of Humayun. One of them was Lad Malika, wife of Taj Khan Sarang Khani, an Afghan noble, who was appointed by Sikander Lodi as Governor of the fort of Chunar. She was a lady of exceptional beauty, strength and talents and aroused the jealousy of her co-wives who made a plan to do away with her but in the attempt Taj Khan himself was killed. Lad Malika cleverly managed to win the support of the soldiers and nobles of her deceased husband and established her control over the state. By her political acumen, liberality and benevolence, she gradually succeeded in making her sons also adhere to her. Later on Sher Shah contrived to marry her and get the fort of Chunar along with the riches collected by Lad Malika.[4]

Another lady who played an important role in politics during this period was Rani Karmavati, a wife of Rana Sanga. She exercised considerable influence over her husband and manipulated to get huge jagirs for her sons Bikram and Uda and also pushed their claims for the throne of Mewar. She also entered into secret communications with Babur and sought his help in establishing the claims of her sons but she could not get an encouraging response from the Mughal Emperor.[5] Soon after, in 1531 A.D. her son Vikramaditya succeeded to the throne of Mewar; but he proved utterly incompetent and

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 212-13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[3] For details see *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 193; *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 212; *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, pp. 289 and 308.

[4] *Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 110; *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* by Abbas Khan (E. & D.) Vol. IV, p. 344; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 155-56; *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 59.

[5] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 612-13; *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* by G.N. Sharma, pp. 46-47.

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neglected the administration. He lost confidence and co-operation of the Rajput nobility. The situation was controlled by his mother, Rani Karmavati, who had tact, ability and also political foresight. The political situation became still worse when Bahadur Shah of Gujrat threatened with an invasion of Mewar. The Rani sent a bracelet (*Rakhi*) to Humayun and appealed for help but she could not get any substantial help from him.[1] Ultimately she had to purchase peace from Bahadur Shah by offering Malwa along with a huge sum of money, a number of horses and elephants.[2]

The trouble was averted only for the time being. The deteriorating political condition of Mewar under Vikram encouraged Bahadur Shah who made a second attack at Chittor in 1535 A.D. Rani Karmavati made the last bid to protect the fort, assembled the Rajput nobles and offered stiff resistance to the forces of Bahadur Shah but the artillery of Bahadur Shah under Rumi Khan proved too devastating to be faced. Defeat started in the very face of the Rajputs. The Rani performed *Jauhar* and the fort was captured by Bahadur Shah on March 8, 1535 A.D.[3]

The active role played by Rani Karmavati in the politics of Mewar and her heroic end, proves her ability and active interest in the politics.

The early years of the reign of Akbar were full of political upheavals in which some ladies also played important roles. One of them was Mah Chuchak Begam, a stepmother of Akbar, who was married to Humayun in 1546 A.D. Her son, Mirza Mohammad Hakim, was appointed Governor of Kabul by Humayun in 1556 A.D. and was placed under the guardianship of Munim Khan who assisted him in the management of the administration of Kabul. But the mother of the prince, Mah Chuchak Begam, was an ambitious lady and exercised her influence to a great extent in the political affairs of Kabul. In 1560 A.D., after the fall of Bairam Khan when Munim Khan was called to the court he left behind his son Ghani Khan to assist the prince; but the latter was not as efficient as his father. This situation was fully exploited by Mah Chuchak Begam who gradually started acquiring a firmer grip over Kabul than earlier. She managed to force out Ghani Khan and even resorted to force, in compelling him to leave for India.[1] Kabul was now under the direct control of Mah Chuchak Begam who appointed Fazil Beg to look after the administration, but his rivals conspired against him and finally murdered him. Then she appointed Shah Wali Atka as the general manager of Kabul but he started arrogating too much power for himself and created suspicion in the mind of the Begam and she managed to put him to death.[2]

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[1] *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* by G.N. Sharma, p. 50; *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 72; *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, p. 65; *Humayun Badshah* by S.K. Banerji, Vol. II, p. 327; *Udaipur Ka Itihas* by Ojha, Vol. I, p. 393; *Mughal Emperor Humayun* by Dr. Awasthi (Thesis), pp. 139-140.

[2] *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* by G.N. Sharma, pp. 51-52; *Udaipur Ka Itihas* by Ojha, Vol. I, p. 393; *Humayun Badshah* by Banerji, Vol. II, p. 327; *Mughal Emperor Humayun* by Dr. Awasthi (Thesis), pp. 139-140.

[3] *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors* by G.N. Sharma, pp. 55-57; *Udaipur Ka Itihas* by Ojha, Vol. I, pp. 398-99.

In 1563 A.D. when the news of the expulsion of Ghani Khan and of the confused state of affairs at Kabul reached the court, Emperor Akbar decided to send Munim Khan to establish peace and order in the province. Munim Khan himself was interested in going to Kabul in order to avenge his own son and so he obeyed the command of the Emperor with alacrity and marched to Kabul immediately. But the resistance offered by the Afghans could not be broken and Munim Khan was ultimately defeated and compelled to retreat.[3]

It was at this time that Shah Abul Maali, a turbulent noble from the family of great Sayyids of Trmiz, having escaped from the prison at Lahore, arrived at Kabul in search of protection and refuge and approached the Begam. The Begam consulted her confidential advisers and finally she welcomed him, treated him with generosity and married her daughter Fakhrunnisa Begam to him with a view to strengthen the position of her family. But Shah Abul Maali did not like the tutelage of Mah Chuchak Begam and started asserting his position. Not only that, in order to establish his complete supremacy over the politics of Kabul he also conspired against her and finally put her to death in 1564 A.D.[1] Luckily for Mirza Hakim, Mirza Sulaiman of Badakhshan came to his rescue, defeated Abul Maali and enabled him to retain his hold on Kabul for some time.

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 288-89 and 317; *Badauni*, Vol. II, p. 54; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 269; *Maasir*, Vol. I, pp. 134-35; *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, pp. 46-47; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 85.

[2] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 288-89.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 289-93.

After the death of her husband she took active interest in thep olitics of Kabul and tried to dominate the scene for the next eight years. It was in her effort to stabilize and strengthen the position of her son Mirza Hakim, that she ultimately lost her life. It is quite obvious that her activities were additional source of nuisance in the early period of the reign of Akbar.

Another lady who played a very enthusiastic role during the early years of Akbar was Maham Anaga, his chief nurse.[2] She was the wife of Nadim Kuka and the mother of Baqi and Adham Kukas. She loved Akbar so much that she happily agreed to expose her very life at Kabul for him in 1547 A.D. when Kamran, fighting against Humayun,[3] threatened to expose Akbar to the fire of the cannon. Consequently, Akbar reposed great confidence in her.

After the death of Humayun in 1556 A.D., Bairam Khan became the regent of Akbar. But gradually Akbar began to dislike the idea of regency. He was advancing in age and was no more satisfied with a life of amusement.[4] He was tired of Bairam Khan and was anxious to assert his own personality. He had before him the examples of his grandfather and father who found it difficult to carry on with the nobles any more.[1] Fortunately enough, Akbar found favourable response in Maham Anaga[2] when the former expressed his desire to get rid of Bairam Khan. Maham Anaga happily co-operated with him. Luckily at this time Maham's relatives occupied important offices and this increased the importance of Maham. Shahabuddin was the governor of Delhi and Baqi Khan of Aligarh.[3] In 1560 A.D., when Akbar went on an hunting expedition from Agra, Maham Anaga urged him to visit his sick mother, who was remembering him at Delhi.[4] She carried on negotiation with Shahabuddin who welcomed Akbar at Delhi.[5] Maham Anaga in consent with Shahabuddin spoke words which changed the mind of the Emperor. They explained to the Emperor that as long as Bairam Khan would remain he would not allow him (Akbar) any authority and power. This exasperated the mind of Akbar.[6] Getting apprehensive of the attitude of Bairam Khan, Shahabuddin and Maham Anaga begged the Emperor's permission to go on pilgrimage. Akbar loved Maham Anaga and did not like the idea of parting from her. He wrote to Bairam Khan that as he had left Agra without consulting him, some of his attendants were afraid of his behaviour.[7] Meanwhile Maham and Shahabuddin started spreading the news of the change of Akbar's mind.[8] They gave hopes of jagirs and titles to every one who came to visit the Emperor.[1] Receiving encouragement from Maham Anaga, and incensed at the conduct of Bairam Khan, the Emperor arrested some of his messengers[2] which resulted in creating a gulf between the two. Disappointed by Akbar's behaviour, Bairam Khan took leave from him with an idea to go on a pilgrimage.[3] Akbar was further informed by his supporters that Bairam Khan had moved out with the aim of conquering the Punjab. Therefore Akbar sent Mir Abdul Latif to persuade him to go to Mecca.[4] The Emperor earlier had decided to take over the reins of the state in his own hands. The situation now became clear to the Khan-i-Khanan. He showed some reluctance, was pursued by Pir Muhammad Sharwani and was defeated by him. He offered submission and finally left for Mecca in 1561 A.D.[5]

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 317-19; *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 284; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 277.

[2] The period of Maham's influence is often known as the period of petticoat government. According to Von Noer her influence continued from 1560 to 1562 A.D. till the death of Adham Khan. *(The Emperor Akbar*, Vol. I, p. 94*)*. But according to V. Smith it remained from 1560 to 1564 A.D. *(Akbar : the Great Mughal*, p. 36*)*. Both of them lead to the conclusion that Maham was a very ambitious lady and used Akbar as an instrument to carry on her plans. What sort of influence she exercised is not clear. But it appears that Akbar never yielded to the influence of the ladies. Hence the contention that he was under a petticoat government does not seem to be appropriate. *Maham Anaga and Akbar* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi (J.I.H. Vol. I, No. I), p. 326.

[3] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 112.

[4] *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, p. 32.

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[1] *Maham Anaga and Akbar* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi (J.I.H. Vol. I, No. I), p. 344.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 237; *Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 195; *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 846.

[5] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 237.

[6] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 238; *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 141, mentions that it was Akbar who spoke to "Maham, who was a marvel for sense, resource and loyalty, Adham, M. Sharafuddin Husain and a number of other courtiers and intimated that he would throw off some of the veils of his world-adorning beauty and would assume sovereignty and would inflict suitable punishment on Bairam Khan." *The Emperor Akbar* by Von Noer, Vol. I, p. 78.

[7] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 238.

[8] *Ibid.*

After the fall of Bairam Khan, Akbar's attention was drawn towards Malwa which was then ruled by Baz Bahadur. Adham Khan, the son of Maham Anaga, was sent against Malwa,[6] and Baz Bahadur was defeated in 1561 A.D. Adham Khan took into his possession all property, the treasure and the seraglio including the dancing and singing girls.[7] The success made Adham Khan vain and instead of sending the booty to the Emperor, he sent only a few elephants and kept for himself the women and the choicest articles of the spoil.[8] Akbar was very much annoyed at the misconduct of Adham Khan. He quietly left Agra in 1561 A.D. to surprise Adham Khan.[9] Maham Anaga sent two swift couriers to warn her son but Akbar reached before them and took Adham by surprise.[10] He was stunned at the Emperor's arrival, paid homage but could not succeed in assuaging the wrath of the Emperor. Soon after Maham Anaga arrived at the scene. She arranged things and finally Adham

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[1] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 240; *Badauni*, Vol. II, p. 31.

[2] *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 77.

[3] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 240; *The Emperor Akbar* by Von Noer, Vol. I, p. 84.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 84; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 241.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 242-43; *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, p. 34.

[6] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 208.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 213; *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, p. 37.

[8] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 214.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

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produced before the Emperor all the booty. His submission was finally accepted.[1] Adham Khan persisted in his wickedness. He deliberately kept back two of the beauties of Baz Bahadur's harem. When Akbar heard it, he gave orders for the search of the two ladies.[2] Maham Anaga perceived that if these two women were discovered by His Majesty, the veil over his acts would be raised and her son's treachery be revealed. She, therefore, caused these two innocent beauties to be put to death.[3] Akbar had great regard for the susceptibilities of Maham Anaga and did not offend her feelings by saying anything. He was in gratitude of his nurse; but she put him in an embarrassing position.

Not only this, Maham Anaga with her loyalty and wisdom, took charge of the affairs of the state.[4] She became the prime confidant of the Emperor. She took Shahabuddin and Khwaja Jahan in her confidence and manipulated the appointment of Bahadur Khan, the brother of Ali Quli Khan, to the office of Vakil. Though he became Vakil, yet the real work was done by Maham Anaga.[5]

Uptil this time every thing went on smoothly. But all this success made Maham Anaga conscious of her importance. She wished to retain power either in her own hands or in collaboration with her relatives.[6] Akbar did not like it. In 1561 A.D. Akbar appointed Shamshuddin Atka Khan as the prime minister.[7] When Shamshuddin Atka Khan undertook the management of the political, financial and military affairs, Maham Anaga "who, from her excellent services, abundant wisdom and exceeding devotion, regarded herself as the substantive prime minister, was displeased at this."[1] Munim Khan was also discontented at the growing influence of Maham Anaga. This was the last straw on the camel's back; differences arose between the Emperor and his nurse. This makes it clear that Akbar was not completely under her influence and was using her as his instrument.[2] Within a period of two months her influence disappeared. The transfer of Pir Muhammad to Malwa and recall of Adham Khan from there by the Emperor make it quite evident that Maham Anaga had lost whatever influence she had on the Emperor.[3] There is no evidence to prove that she gave important offices to her relatives.[4] Only Adham Khan was assigned the task of conquering Malwa, but that was no great favour.[5] It is often said that her aim was the ruin of Bairam Khan and promotion of her son's interest. But the facts do not support this contention. Bairam Khan was not punished; nor did Adham Khan gain any favour. Not only this, when Adham Khan, out of sheer jealousy, murdered Shamshuddin Atka Khan, Akbar did not spare him, and punished him by ordering him to be thrown down the terrace. It bears out that Akbar acted according to his own will. After forty days of her son's death Maham Anaga died of grief in 1562 A.D.

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 221.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 149-50; *The Emperor Akbar* by Von Noer, Vol. I, p. 90.

[5] Abul Fazl says, "For this noble work, wisdom and courage were necessary and in truth Maham Anaga possessed these two qualities in perfection." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 151; *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 847.

[6] *Maham Anaga and Akbar* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi (J.I.H. Vol. I, No. I), p. 343.

[7] *A.N.* (Bev), Vol. II, p, 230.

In short, the theory of petticoat government, led by Maham Anaga, does not appeal much. It appears that Akbar took advantage of Maham Anaga's position and talents, but did not allow himself to be dominated by the ladies of his harem.

Outside the Mughal harem, the Hindu woman who played a significant role during this period, was Durgavati, commonly known as *Rani*.[6] She was the daughter of Raja Salbahan of Ratha and Mahoba and was married to Dalpat, the son of Amar Das.[7] After the death of her husband in 1548 A.D. she became the regent of her son Bir Narain and ruled at Garha by exercising real authority.[1] She was distinguished for courage, counsel and munificence and by virtue of these qualities was able to exercise her sway over the country. No rebellion or uprising took place during the period of her ascendancy. She had 23,000 villages in her possession. Out of these, for 12,000 she appointed 'resident governors' (Shiqdars) and the rest were under her direct control, their headmen being under her subordination.[2] Abul Fazl remarks, "She did great things by dint of her foreseeing abilities. She had great contest with Baz Bahadur and Mians and was always victorious".[3] She was interested in the welfare of her people and won their respect by doing many public works.[4] She was 'a lady of loveliness and grace'.[5]

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 230; *The Emperor Akbar* by Von Noer, Vol. I, p. 95.

[2] *Maham Anaga and Akbar* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi (J.I.H. Vol. I, No. I), p. 343.

[3] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 235.

[4] *The Emperor Akbar* by Von Noer, Vol. I, p. 89.

[5] *Maham Anaga and Akbar* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi (J.I.H. Vol. I, No. I), p. 338.

[6] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 324; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 280.

[7] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 324.

With all this Durgavati became confident of her courage and strength. She was not ready to submit her authority to Emperor Akbar and did not even move when Asaf Khan, the eminent general of Akbar, conquered Panna. He acquainted himself with the internal conditions of her kingdom, her revenue and expenditure etc. At last in the year 1564 A.D. he was ordered by the Emperor to invade Garha.[6] Durgavati was taken by surprise. She called a council of her ministers and officers and decided to attack the enemy. She came out on a lofty elephant, named *Sarman*, with a few troops which she had, with great difficulty, collected in the emergency.[7] She fought bravely with the Imperial army. Two arrows struck her but she drew them out.[8] At last, wounded in the battle, she thought it better to die with honour than to live in disgrace. She asked one of her followers, named Adhar, who was riding in front of her elephant, to stab her.[1] The latter declined[2] to do so, and the *Rani* stabbed herself, "I am overcome in battle, God forbid that I be also overcome in name and honour".[3] So died the Chandel princess Durgavati.

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 326; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 87.

[2] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 324; *Tabqat* (E. & D.), Vol. V, p. 288; *Maasir*, Vol. I, pp. 37-38.

[3] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 327.

[4] *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, p. 50.

[5] *Badauni*, Vol. II, p. 65; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 280.

[6] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 327; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 280.

[7] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 329; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 280; *Badauni*, Vol. II, p. 65; *Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 218; *Maasir*, Vol. I, pp. 37-38.

[8] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 330; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 281; *Badauni*, Vol. II, p. 65.

Another interesting personality of this period was Bakhtunnisa Begam. She was the half-sister of Akbar and was married to Khwaja Hasan of Baḍakhshan. In 1581 A.D. Muhammad Hakim, the governor of Kabul, incited by Shah Mansur who was Wazir in 1576 A.D., and who had conspired against Akbar in 1580 A.D., rebelled in Kabul. He invaded the Punjab and advanced to Lahore, but was checked by Man Singh who was then governor of that province. Akbar declared war on Muhammad Hakim and the latter took shelter into hills.[4] The Emperor himself went to Kabul. Muhammad Hakim was pardoned but was humiliated by the appointment of his sister, Bakhtunnisa Begam, to the governorship of Kabul.[5] Akbar informed her that he had no concern with Muhammad Hakim and in the event of his misbehaving again he would not be shown any kindness.[6] After the departure of the Emperor from Kabul, though Muhammad Hakim resumed his old position, yet all the official orders were issued in his sister's name.[7]

By appointing Bakhtunnisa to the government of Kabul, Akbar succeeded in managing the situation there. The Emperor, on the one hand, was afraid of Abdulla Khan Uzbek's activities, and on the other hand by Muhammad Hakim's behaviour. By tact he tried to avoid conflict between them. Bakhtunnisa Begam skilfully helped the Emperor in solving this problem.

Just as during the reign of his father (Humayun), Khanzada Begam brought about political reconciliations, so during

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[1] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 281.

[2] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 330; *Ferishta*, Vol. II, p. 218; The author of *Tabqat* (Vol. II, p. 281) mentions that the driver stabbed her with a dagger; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 38; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 88.

[3] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 330; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 38.

[4] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 536.

[5] *Monserrate* (p. 153) states that Kabul was made over to Bakhtunnisa Begam, the sister of Muhammad Hakim.

[6] *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 271.

[7] *Akbar : the Great Mughal* by V. Smith, p. 143; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 128.

Akbar's reign, Miriam Makani, his mother, and Salima Sultan Begam, his wife, played important roles in political matters. In 1599 A.D., when Akbar was leaving for the Deccan, prince Salim, who had not been granted audience for sometime past due to his habit of excessive drinking was permitted to make *Kornish* by the pleadings of Miriam Makani who softened the heart of the Emperor.[1] Once again Salim committed a serious crime. Tired of the long reign of his father which had already lasted for more than forty years, and impatient to occupy the throne, he resolved to capture it by force. In 1601 A.D. he unfurled the banner of revolt and assumed the royal title at Allahabad. The situation became critical. The Emperor was very unhappy. No one dared to petition for the prince. In the end Miriam Makani and Gulbadan Begam, his aunt, begged for his forgiveness. The Emperor granted their wishes. The prince was allowed to present himself before the Emperor. He directed Salima Sultan Begam to convey the news of forgiveness to the prince. She went to him with an elephant, named *Fath Lashkar*, a special horse, a robe of honour[2] and thus through their efforts the prince was finally pardoned in 1603 A.D.[3]

During the very first year of the reign of Jahangir his stepmother, Salima Sultan Begam, accompanied by some other Begams of the harem, played a very significant role in contemporary politics. In 1606 A.D. Khusru, the oldest son of Jahangir, revolted against his father[4] at the instigation of Mirza Aziz Koka, better known as Khan Azam, the son of Shamshuddin Atka.[5] It is said that Khan Azam used to go to the court dressed in his shroud because he apprehended that he would be killed any day. But he had no control over his tongue. One night he had hot exchange of words with Amir-ul-Umra Sharif Khan, the grand Wazir. In a private meeting the Emperor took counsel of the prominent nobles in which both Amir-ul-Umra and Mahabat Khan suggested that Khan Azam should be put to death immediately. But Khan-i-Jahan Lodi opposed the idea. It was at this moment that Salima Sultan

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 1140.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 1222-23.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 1230.

[4] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 51.

[5] *Massir*, Vol. I, p. 328.

Begam called out from behind the *parda*, "Your Majesty, all the Begams are assembled in the *Zenana* for the purpose of interceding for Mirza Aziz Koka. It will be better if you come there, otherwise they will come to you." Jahangir was thus constrained to go to the famale apartment, and on account of the pressure exercised by the Begams, he finally pardoned him.[1]

On another occasion, after the rebellion of Khusru was crushed in 1613 A.D., his mothers and sisters requested the Emperor repeatedly that, as the prince was repenting for his past behaviour, he should be pardoned and permitted audience. At the intercession of the ladies of the harem, Jahangir ultimately allowed audience to Khusru and permitted him to pay his respects to the Emperor every day.[2]

One of the most striking personalities of this period was Nurjahan Begam, the daughter of Itimad-ud-daula. She was married to Jahangir in 1611 A.D. She personally looked after Jahangir with great care and affection and was very loyal to him. She was a courageous lady and was endowed with the capacity of understanding the political problems and of taking active interest in matters of administration. She served as a sound adviser to her husband. The Emperor reposed great confidence in her. Naturally she exercised great influence over her husband.

In the year 1623 A.D., Prince Khurram rebelled against his father Jahangir, and to create a diversion so that the pressure of the Imperial forces against him might be lessened, he instigated Jagat Singh, son of Raja Basu, to retreat to the hills and stir sedition in the Punjab. When ultimately the resources of Jagat Singh exhausted, he sought the protection of Nurjahan, and through her intercession, was pardoned by the Emperor.[3]

The influence exercised by Nurjahan on the Emperor as well as the contemporary politics of the Empire is a matter on which the opinions are divided.

It is said that she was a very ambitious lady and wanted to have power in her own hands. Consequently, she formed a

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[1] *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 328.

[2] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 252.

[3] Jahangir writes "In order to please and satisfy her (Nurjahan) the pen of pardon was drawn through the record of his faults." *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 289.

Junta (clique) of her close relatives including her father Itimad-ud-daula, her mother Asmat Begam and her brother Asaf Khan.[1] To strengthen the group in 1612 A.D., Khurram, the second son of Jahangir, was also included in it through his marriage with the daughter of Asaf Khan.[2] It was through the help of this Junta that Nurjahan exercised her influence by giving important places to her relatives.[3] This roused the jealousy of other nobles who resented the control of politics by this group.[4]

Later, after Khurram had gained the title of *Shahjahan*, and was gradually coming into prominence in the political affairs of the Empire, there gradually developed a tension between him and Nurjahan which ultimately alienated the prince from this group.[5] Perhaps their interests clashed which impelled Nurjahan to plan to send Khurram off to a distant place like Qandhar. Not only that, he was deprived of his jagirs as well.[6] Obviously this was against the interest of Khurram who declined to obey the command issued to him at the instance of Nurjahan. This finally led to the rebellion of Khurram[7] which was successfully suppressed. Her growing influence in politics ultimately accelerated the resentment among some of the nobles and, it is said, it was responsible for the rebellion of Mahabat Khan, one of the old grandees of the Empire.[8]

Though this view has been fairly current, it is difficult to assert it because it is not fully supported by contemporary or other reliable documents. Much of the arguments given in support of this theory are based on speculation and not corroborated by facts. Under the circumstances, it cannot be taken to be very authentic or reliable.[9]

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[1] Beni Prasad, p. 160.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 193.

[3] *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 56-57; *Tatimma-i-Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* by Muhammad Hadi (E. & D.), Vol. VII, p. 394; *Maasir*, Vol. II, pp. 1077-78, Pelsaert, p. 50; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 163.

[4] Beni Prasad, pp. 167-68.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 298-301.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 307; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 106.

[8] Beni Prasad, pp. 342-45; De Laet, p. 226.

[9] *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 423.

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The foreign travellers, who visited India during this period, have particularly mentioned the existence of a Junta in the court of Jahangir which was formed by Nurjahan. There are references to this effect in the accounts of Thomas Roe (1615), De Laet, Pelsaert (1620-27), Terry (1622), Pietra Della Valle (1623-24), and Peter Mundy (1628-34).[1] Their accounts are often based on gossips and therefore are not very reliable.

Amongst the contemporary Persian authorities, Wali Sirhindi, in his *Tawarikh-i-Jahangir Shahi*, written in the fourteenth year of Jahangir's reign, does not make any reference to such an influence exercised by Nurjahan in contemporary politics. *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam*, written by Kami Shirazi in 1625-26 A.D., also does not refer to the existence of any such Junta in the court of Jahangir. Besides this, it is very surprising that in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* there is absolutely no reference to any such Junta.

There are only two historical works which make some reference to the influence of Nurjahan on contemporary politics. One of them is Muatamid Khan, the author of *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri*, who refers to the jealousy between Nurjahan and Khurram. But he wrote his work during the reign of Shahjahan, hence his opinion may not be free and reliable. Kamgar Husain, who wrote *Maasir-i-Jahangiri* in 1630 A.D., seems to have followed the footsteps of Muatamid Khan.

Under these circumstances, the opinion of these two authors cannot be treated to be very reliable.

A close scrutiny of all the relevant sources leads to the conclusion that whatever influence Nurjahan exercised over Jahangir was of a purely personal nature, based possibly on her emotions and her devotion to him.[2] It will be unfair to attribute purely political ambition to her acts of interference or her active participation in political matters.

The only instance of her taking active interest and coming into limelight in contemporary politics, was when she participated in the suppression of the rebellion of Mahabat Khan. Prince

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[1] *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mughal*, Vol. I, p. 118; De Laet, pp. 201-2; Pelsaert, p. 50; Fryer, p. 57; Terry (Early Travels), p. 329; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 54; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, pp. 205-6.

[2] *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 422.

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Parvez and Mahabat Khan had been sent to the Deccan to crush the rebellion of Shahjahan. After the suppression of the rebellion in 1625 A.D., when Prince Parvez and Mahabat Khan were encamping near Sarangpur, orders were issued for the transfer of Mahabat Khan to Bengal.[1] Both complied with the Imperial Orders, though with some reluctance. Mahabat Khan was further asked to send the elephants and to account for the money which he had obtained during the revolt of Shahjahan.[2] Further, he was charged with breach of royal etiquette in so far as he had betrothed his daughter and married her without the permission of the Emperor.[3]

Mahabat Khan deeply resented this harsh treatment. His feeling was that these orders were sent to him at the instance of Asaf Khan who was always jealous of the former and who wanted to stage a show-down for him.[4] Therefore, he planned to separate the Emperor from his 'evil genius' Asaf Khan. With this plan in his mind, he left for the court with four or five thousand Rajput soldiers. At this time Jahangir was encamping on the bank of Jhelum on his way to Kabul.[5] He waited for an opportunity. One day when the Imperial cortege had crossed over to the other side of the Jhelum and the Emperor was yet on this side, Mahabat Khan forced his way to the Emperor, who was taken by surprise when he found that his camp was in the possession of Mahabat Khan's men, and he was finally taken to Mahabat Khan's camp.[6]

In the excitement of his daring act Mahabat Khan neglected to take Nurjahan into custody. When he realised his mistake, he came back to the royal camp but found that she, in disguise, had managed to slip away to the other side of the river.[7] She immediately called upon her brother Asaf Khan, upbraided him strongly and summoned a council of all the prominent nobles and officers, and while reproaching them she said, "All this has happened through your neglect and stupid arrangements. What never entered into the imagination of any one has come to pass and now you stand sticken with shame for your conduct before God and man. You must do your best to repair this evil and advise what course to pursue."[1] They unanimously decided to try their arms against the forces of Mahabat Khan.[2]

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[1] Beni Prasad, p. 339; De Laet, p. 224.

[2] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 240; Beni Prasad, p. 340; *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 405.

[3] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 420; Beni Prasad, p. 341.

[4] *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 406.

[5] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 421; Beni Prasad, p. 342; *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 406.

[6] *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam* by Shirazi, pp. 13-14; *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R.P. Tripathi, p. 407; Beni Prasad, p. 345.

[7] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 423; Beni Prasad, p. 345.

When this news reached Jahangir, he realised the folly of this venture because the army at the disposal of Mahabat Khan was too strong to be defeated by the Imperialists.[3] Jahangir sent repeated messages to Nurjahan suggesting her not to risk a battle with Mahabat Khan. He also sent his signet ring to convince her of the genuineness of his letters.[4] But his suggestion was completely ignored and the Imperialists decided to use force. Fidai Khan made an attempt in the night in order to rescue the Emperor, but he failed.[5]

Ultimately, Nurjahan decided to lead the Imperialists against Mahabat Khan. She seated herself on an elephant along with the daughter of Shahriyar.[6] The Imperialists attempted to cross the river but the ford which was chosen by the Imperialist commander Ghazi Khan contained many deep pools and created serious difficulties. Before they could reach midstream, there was an utter confusion and disorder in the army.[7] Noted generals like Khwaja Abul Hasan, Asaf Khan, and Muatamid Khan received message from Nurjahan Begam to take courage, maintain discipline in the army and cross the river.[8] However, the army crossed the river and the battle which started immediately

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[1] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 424; Beni Prasad, pp. 345-46.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 346; *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 424.

[3] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 424.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 425; Beni Prasad, p. 347.

[6] *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam* by Shirazi, p. 19.

[7] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 425; *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam* by Shirazi, p. 19.

[8] The message sent by Nurjahan through a eunuch, named Nadim, was "The Begam wants to know if this is the time for delay and irresolution, strike boldly forward so that by your advance the enemy may be repulsed and take to flight." *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 426.

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was supervised personally by Nurjahan.[1] During the course of battle her granddaughter was struck by an arrow in the arm. Her elephant, after having received a cut on the trunk and after having been wounded by spears, rushed back, swam the river and brought Nurjahan safe to the other side.[2] Nurjahan busied herself nursing the wounds of her granddaughter. Fidai Khan continued the attack, but his efforts failed.[3] The Imperialists could not succeed in their attempt. Asaf Khan found himself in a difficult situation; he had already courted the hostility of Mahabat Khan. He seems to have lost the confidence of Nurjahan as well. In sheer cowardice and fright he fled to his jagir at Attock.[4] Fidai Khan, who had been very active against Mahabat Khan, went to his son at Rohtas. Others ultimately deserted to Mahabat Khan.[5]

Nurjahan could not bear the separation from her husband for long. Failing in her efforts to release Jahangir by force, she ultimately surrendered herself to Mahabat Khan and joined her husband in captivity.[6] Mahabat Khan now became master of the situation. The captivity was too galling for Nurjahan to stand. She quietly started planning the release of her husband and herself. She had a two-fold plan to full the suspicions of Mahabat Khan and to win the nobles to her side.[7] While the first part was to be executed by Jahangir, the second part of the plan was taken up by Nurjahan herself.[8] She employed all resources to excite the already resentful nobles against Mahabat Khan. "She cajoled the unwilling, she bribed the greedy, she strengthened the wavering, she held out promises to all. She enlisted the support of many humbler men as well and organised a great conspiracy."[9] Nurjahan, thus, managed to have a strong following. She instructed her eunuch, Hushiyar Khan, to collect about 2,000 men in Lahore and proceed towards the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 426; *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam* by Shirazi, p. 19.

[2] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 427.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 427-28.

[4] Beni Prasad, p. 350.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 354-55.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

Imperial court.[1] The plan succeeded. Jahangir reviewed the troops raised by Nurjahan and informed Mahabat Khan about it. The Khan did not make any resistance, professed to obey the Emperor and finally took to flight.[2] He took along with him his rival Asaf Khan, his son Abu Talib, and also the son of Daniyal. The royal army pursued him, but could not overtake him.[3]

The Emperor, freed from Mahabat Khan, reached Rohtas, where regular *darbar* was held.[4] The most important question before the Imperialists was the suppression of Mahabat Khan and release of the prominent nobles. Nurjahan sent an 'imperious mandate' through Afzal Khan to Mahabat Khan for the release of the nobles. Mahabat Khan released the son of Daniyal but refused to release Asaf Khan till he had ensured his own safety and had reached Lahore. Nurjahan again threatened him to release Asaf Khan at once. Then Mahabat Khan released him after taking from him an oath of fidelity, but he still retained the son of Asaf Khan as hostage; he released him after some time.[5]

The Imperial camp now arrived at Lahore and Asaf Khan was appointed the Vakil.[6] Mahabat Khan again allied himself with Shahjahan which alarmed Nurjahan, and she appointed Khan Jahan as the commander-in-chief of the Imperial forces and sent him to suppress them.[7] But unfortunately Jahangir, whose health was failing, died in October, 1627 A.D., near Rajauri, on his way back from Kashmir to Lahore.

Immediately after the death of the Emperor, Nurjahan called the nobles for counsel, but Asaf Khan, who was in his heart of hearts a partisan of his son-in-law, Shahjahan, smelt some foul play and prevented the meeting.[8] He placed Nurjahan almost in confinement. He sent summons to Shahjahan in the Deccan and, for the time being, proclaimed Dawar Bakhsh, the son of Khusru, as the Emperor.[1] Nurjahan wanted Shahriyar to be the Emperor, though she was placed under guard, she somehow managed to send message to Shahriyar advising him to collect as many men as he could and hasten to her.[2] Shahriyar proclaimed himself Emperor at Lahore. Asaf Khan and Dawar Bakhsh who were one day's march ahead of Nurjahan, reached Lahore, defeated Shahriyar, imprisoned him and blinded him.[3] Shahjahan was then proclaimed Emperor of Delhi in 1627 A.D.[4]

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[1] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 430; Beni Prasad, p. 356.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Beni Prasad, p. 356.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 431; Beni Prasad, p. 357.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

[8] Beni Prasad, p. 368.

After the accession of Shahjahan, Nurjahan at once retired from the political scene. Shahjahan granted her an annual pension of two lakhs of rupees which she accepted. She wore only white clothes, remained aloof, and refused to accept any pleasure parties.[5] Nurjahan's complete retirement from the political activities is very significant so far as her personal ambitions are concerned. She had been so close to the affairs of the Empire that if she had any desire, she could have continued to meddle with the political affairs even after the death of Jahangir. She had already proved her ability, intelligence and capacity for understanding and appreciating the political problems. Her complete abandonment of the political activities leads one to conclude that her interests were confined to Jahangir and Jahangir alone. After his death she preferred to lead the life of a recluse rather than take active interest in politics. It can be argued that after the accession of Shahjahan she lost all power and influence she enjoyed earlier, and hence she was not in a position to influence politics. But her ability, her intimate knowledge of political affairs and her contacts with some important nobles were enough to enable her to cook up certain plans or to indulge in conspiracies and political mischief. The complete absence of all this can only be attributed to her desire to retire completely after the death of her husband with whom were bound all her interests.

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[1] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, pp. 435-36; Beni Prasad, p. 370.

[2] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 436.

[3] *Ibid*., pp. 436-37.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 438; Beni Prasad, p. 371.

[5] Beni Prasad, p. 373.

3

WOMEN AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS-II

(1627 A.D.—1748 A.D.)

DURING THE early years of the reign of Shahjahan, his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, exerted some pressure in political matters. Even before the accession of Shahjahan to the throne of Delhi. she had followed him cheerfully in his wanderings and exile, patiently bearing the pains and rigours of life in the forests of Telingana, Bengal, Mewar and the Deccan.[1]

In 1628 A.D., when Shahjahan ascended the throne, she occupied the premier position in the harem and the Emperor usually consulted her about private as well as state affairs.[2] She was entrusted with the Royal Seal. After the state documents had been finally drafted, they were sent to the Imperial harem and it was her privilege to imprint the seal on them.[3] This enabled her to get an insight into the current affairs, in some of which she took active interest.

In 1627-28 A.D., when Shahjahan travelled from South to North in order to occupy the throne, he heard reports about the doubtful attitude of Saif Khan, the governor of Gujrat. He ordered him to be brought to the court. Saif Khan was son-in-law of Mumtaz Mahal; she was interested in his safety, and, therefore, sent Parastar Khan to Ahmedabad to see that no calamity befalls him. It was on her recommendation that the Emperor relieved the rigours of the imprisonment of Saif Khan, and

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[1] Peter Mundy, Vol. II, pp. 212-13.

[2] 'Mumtaz Mahal' by J.N. Chaudhary (Islamic Culture, Vol. XI, 1937), p. 373.

[3] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 9; 'Jahanara' by G. Yazdani (Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Vol. II, 1912), p. 153.

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ordered that he should be subjected neither to mental nor to physical torture.[1]

According to Manucci, Mumtaz Mahal was also responsible for creating ill-feeling towards and destroying the hold of, the Portuguese of Hugli.[2] She was quite hostile towards them because they had carried off two of her slave girls.[3] It is said that she was determined to inflict severe punishment on them, but her early death left her desire unfulfilled.[4] Her determined hostility towards the Portuguese aggravated the wrath of Shahjahan against them.

The career of Mumtaz Mahal was short. She died in 1631 A.D. After her death, the honour of being the premier lady of the harem fell upon Jahanara Begam, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan. She took an active part in political life. Being the favourite daughter of her father, she obtained whatever she desired[5] and among all the ladies of the palace she was the most respected.[6] Her ascendancy in the court was unlimited.[7] Anyone—a stranger, a courtier or a governor—who wished to obtain favour from the Emperor, found it necessary to win her support. She also received valuable presents.[8]

Jahanara Begam sometimes healed the discords in the Imperial family which had its bearing on political affairs.[9] In the year 1644 A.D., Aurangzeb, influenced by unwise counsel of some of his foolish advisers and by some of his own acts, incurred the displeasure of Shahjahan, and his jagir and rank were confiscated.[10]

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[1] Qazwini, Vol. II, ff. 227, 277; K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 393; *History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by Dr. B.P. Saksena, p. 61.

[2] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 182.

[3] *History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by Dr. B.P. Saksena, pp. 106-7.

[4] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 182.

[5] Some foreign travellers such as Bernier scandalized the relation between the father and the daughter (Bernier, pp. 11-12). But their statements are not very reliable. Manucci says that Bernier's statement is founded on the gossips of low people. Manucci, Vol. I, pp. 217-20; *History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by Dr. B.P. Saksena, pp. 338-43.

[6] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 221.

[7] Bernier, p. 11.

[8] Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Vol. II, 1912, p. 155 ('Jahanara' by G. Yazdani).

[9] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 73.

[10] The reason of Shahjahan's displeasure given by historians is

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It was on the appeal of Jahanara Begam that the Emperor forgave Aurangzeb and restored to him the former rank and office.[1] In the year 1654 A.D., Shahjahan attacked Raja Prithvichand, the king of Srinagar. The army of the Emperor was aided by Raja Saubhagya Prakash of Sirmur. The war continued for two years. In 1656 A.D., Raja Prithvichand, despaired of success, initiated a correspondence with Jahanara Begam, assuring her of his loyalty and innocence. He expressed his willingness to submit if Dara Shukoh would intercede. Through the mediation of Jahanara Begam he was reconciled and he sent his son Medini Singh to Dara Shukoh who introduced him to the court and sought pardon for his father.[2]

In the year 1656 A. D., when Aurangzeb was the viceroy of the Deccan, he invaded Golkunda and besieged it. He was very much annoyed with the ruler of Golkunda, Abdulla Qutb Shah, for non-payment of the arrears of the tribute and also for imprisoning the family of his Wazir Mir Jumla.[3] Aurangzeb also coveted the rich kingdom of Golkunda and urged Shahjahan to annex it.[4] He was not willing to have any compromise with Qutb Shah and was bent upon annexing his kingdom.[5] At that time Qutb Shah wrote letters to Jahanara Begam and Dara Shukoh. Both of them intervened in the matter and it was through their intercession that Qutb Shah was pardoned and he secured peace on payment of indemnity.[6]

In January, 1658 A.D., when Aurangzeb decided to leave the Deccan for participating in the war of succession to obtain the throne of Delhi, he asked Qutb Shah to clear the war indemnity which was imposed on him. But Qutb Shah wanted remission of a part of the indemnity.[7] Aurangzeb asked him to

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obscure. Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 76; 'Jahanara' by G. Yazdani (Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Vol. II, 1912), p. 154.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Dara Shukoh* by K.R. Qanungo, Vol. I, pp. 136-37.

[3] Sarkar, Vol. I, pp. 212-35.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.

[5] *Dara Shukoh* by K.R. Qanungo, Vol. I, pp. 137-38.

[6] *Ibid*; Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 239.

[7] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 364.

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appeal to Jahanara Begam and Dara Shukoh.[1] The suggestion was only a taunt but it throws light on the extent to which she could influence the affairs of the state.

When the war of succession started among her brothers for obtaining the throne of Delhi in 1658 A.D., Jahanara Begam favoured Dara, helped him and prayed for his success.[2] She tried her best to persuade her brothers to avoid any conflict. In May, 1658 A.D., Aurangzeb crossed Chambal and reached near Samugarh. Dara failed to hold Chambal against Aurangzeb and the latter, after crossing it (Chambal), reached Bhadrur, forty miles east of Dholpur. At this moment, before the battle of Samugarh started, on 23rd May, 1658 A.D., Jahanara Begam sent a letter to Aurangzeb, asking him to give up the evil designs and obey his father.[3] That she was favourably inclined to Dara is patent enough. She warned Aurangzeb of the dangers in the path which he was taking and of the risks to which he was exposing himself and the Empire at large.[4] But the letter proved to be of no avail.

In the battle of Samugarh, which was fought between Dara and Aurangzeb on 29th May, 1658 A.D., Dara was defeated. He arrived at Agra and was very frustrated. Jahanara Begam and Shahjahan both felt very sad. After a few hours Dara fled to Delhi. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb reached Agra in June, 1658 A.D., and was joined by the Imperial nobles and the army. He now took possession of Agra and besieged his father Shahjahan in the fort. He cut down the supplies. The Emperor appealed to Aurangzeb for pity but he demanded complete surrender of Agra fort. Ultimately on 8th June, 1658 A.D., Shahjahan yielded; he opened the fort, and was imprisoned by Aurangzeb.[5] On 10th June, 1658 A.D., Jahanara visited Aurangzeb to try her own influence and persuasion. She proposed the partition of the Empire. She suggested to Aurangzeb that the Punjab and adjoining territories be entrusted to Dara, Gujrat to Murad, Bengal to Shuja, the Deccan be placed under Sultan Mohammad, while the rest of the Empire with the position of heir-apparent and title of *Iqbal-buland* should go to him (Aurangzeb).[1] She also entreated him to have an interview with Shahjahan. But Aurangzeb refused her proposal and Jahanara felt very dejected.[2] Being grieved at her brother's behaviour, she came to her father's side and preferred imprisonment rather than sharing the laurels of victory with her brother. Finally, she reconciled herself to the situation and attended her father till his last day.[3]

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[1] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 364.

[2] Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 55; Manucci, Vol. I, p. 288; Bernier, p. 12. Manucci writes that she wanted to marry Dara (Vol. I, p. 211). Bernier writes that she was not granted permission to marry for the fear of her husband becoming powerful (Bernier, p. 12). But it is not supported by any reliable authority.

[3] *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri* by Aqil Khan Razi, pp. 16-17; Sarkar, Vol. II, p. 73.

[4] *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri* by Aqil Khan Razi, pp. 16-17.

[5] Sarkar, Vol. II, pp. 66-82.

There are many letters written to Jahanara Begam which indicate the extent of her influence in matters of appointment, settlement of dispute, and other affairs of the court.[4] The letters further indicate that such requests were made either because they proved to be a quicker way of getting matters attended to or because the support of Jahanara Begam was a decisive way of getting things done.

[1] *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri* by Aqil Khan Razi, p. 289; Sarkar, Vol. II, pp. 83-84.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] It is reported that at the death of Shahjahan, Aurangzeb offered her solace through a letter in reply to which she worte a letter expressing her gratitude to him (Indian Historical Records Commission, Vol. III, 1921, p. 23). However, the authenticity of her letter is doubted by Prof. Sarkar.

[4] A number of letters are collected in *Ruqqat-i-Alamgiri* and *Adab-i-Alamgiri* which refer to such matters.

In one of the letters Aurangzeb recommended the case of Murtaza Quli Khan, the son of Hisamuddin, to Jahanara Begam for appointment. *Ruqqat*, f. 200a; *Adab*, f. 197a, b.

In another letter Aurangzeb requested Jahanara to help him in getting back the fort of Asirgarh which had been taken from him and given to Murad. *Ruqqat*, ff. 200b, 201b.

Jahanara Begam wrote a letter to Aurangzeb about the appointment of Mir Nasir in place of Multafit Khan which, he said, would be done. *Ruqqat*, f. 198b.

In another letter Jahanara recommended Mohammad Nakki to open a *Karkhana* in Burhanpur and Machlipattam. *Ruqqat*, f. 200a, b; *Adab*, f. 200a, b.

In a letter Jahanara wrote to Aurangzeb about the claims of Atish Khan. Aurangzeb replied that whatever she desired would be carried out. *Ruqqat*, f. 199a.

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Some chiefs and native rulers also approached her, seeking her help in solving their political problems. On one occasion Raja Budh Prakash of Sirmur sent her valuable presents[1] and requested her to plead his case to the Emperor for deciding his dispute with the Raja of Garhwal.[2] He also requested her to send *farmans* for imprisoning the *Zamindars* and *Tahwildars* of Sondha for their misconduct. But such serious matters were not to be dealt with by the ladies and she asked him to make the representation direct to the Emperor.[3]

Even the foreign traders felt the influence of Jahanara Begam at court. When the Dutch embassy found itself unsuccessful in getting permission to carry on their trade, it made every effort to win the favour of principal members of the court, and specially of Jahanara Begam, whose influence with her father was unbounded.[4] The reason of her interest was that the revenue of Surat formed part of her privy purse. After some negotiations a satisfactory settlement was reached with the Dutch traders according to which the Dutch request for exemption from custom at Surat and Broach was rejected, but it was agreed that in future they should make a fixed annual payment of fifty-five thousand rupees in lieu of all dues. A *farman* was promised granting freedom from 'way-dues' in Bengal. Another *farman* was issued permitting them the construction of a building and repairing of boats at Surat.[5]

Realising the enormous influence of Jahanara Begam, sometimes the foreign traders personally went to pay her respects.[6] But it is not very clear whether the foreign traders were formally received by Jahanara Begam or simply their problems were discussed.

The Dutch traders often approached Jahanara Begam through her Diwan and maids to obtain her *nishans* in order to recover debts etc. easily.[1]

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[1] Like Myrobolans, Pomegranates, Zodary (a golden winged bird), Musk etc. Persian Letters from Jahanara, daughter of Shahjahan, King of Delhi to Raja Budh Prakash of Sirmur communicated by Mr. H.A. Rose (J.A.S.B. Vol. 7, 1911), p. 453.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 454.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 453-54.

[4] English Factory Records (1651-54), p. 11.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

[6] David went to Jahanara Begam to pay his respects. English Factory Records (1651-54), p. 50.

Raushanara Begam, the second daughter of Shahjahan, was not on very friendly terms with her sister Jahanara Begam. She (Raushanara) was a partisan of Aurangzeb. Revengeful and unscrupulous as she was, she tried to assist Aurangzeb in his plan of snatching the crown from the trembling hands of his father. She was in touch with the affairs in the seraglio and surreptitiously conveyed to her brother regular reports of all the developments.[2] When she heard the news that Aurangzeb had taken up arms in order to occupy the throne of Delhi, she placed at his disposal all gold and silver available to her.[3] Aurangzeb promised her the title of *Shah Begam* which he conferred on her in 1669 A.D. in addition to a cash reward of five lakhs of rupees.[4]

During the reign of Aurangzeb too, were present active, alert and ambitious ladies. But Aurangzeb did not seem to have allowed his wives to take active part in politics. Dilras Banu Begam, one of his wives, seems to have been a proud and self-willed lady and the Emperor stood in some awe of her.[5] Another wife, Udaipuri Mahal, was married to him while she was very young. She continued to influence him till his death and it was under the spell of her influence that he pardoned many faults of his son Kam Bakhsh.[6]

Aurangzeb's sisters also played some significant role during his reign. Raushanara Begam, who had helped him in the war of succession, was one of them. When Aurangzeb fell ill in May, 1662 A.D., she began to take active interest in the state affairs. Just as Dara had done at the illness of Shahjahan, she withheld the report of her brother's illness.[1] She took the Royal Seal and wrote letters to many Rajas and generals on behalf of nine-year old Sultan Azam.[2] She did not allow any one to see the Emperor, and a rumour spread that he was dead. She persuaded the Hindu princes to support Azam. Prince Muazzam resented it and attempted to circumvent her design. She hated him and behaved insolently towards him. When the Emperor came to know of the activities of his sister, he was immensely displeased and she lost much of her brother's love and regard for her.[3]

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[1] There was a matter of insurance for which the Dutch procured letters from the Begam's Diwan but it was of no use. So they approached her nurse Huri Khanam to help them in procuring the *nishan* of Jahanara Begam and thus realising the insurance money. English Factory Records (1655-1660), pp. 15, 73-74.

On another occasion, Hakikat Khan assured them (the Dutch) that he would procure a *nishan* from Begam Saheb assisting them to recover the debt of Chattarsal (Chittersal). English Factory Records (1646-50), pp. 219-20.

[2] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 314, Vol. III, pp. 58-59; Hamilton, Vol. I, p. 171 (by mistake he calls her Nur Mahal).

[3] Tavernier, Vol. I, pp. 376-77.

[4] *Alamgir Nama*, p. 368; Tavernier, Vol. I, pp. 376-77.

[5] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 61.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 64.

Another sister of Aurangzeb, Jahanara Begam, also played considerable part when the Maratha conqueror Shivaji paid a visit to Agra in the year 1666 A.D. It was Jai Singh, the Kachchwaha ruler of the house of Amber, who realised necessity of winning over Shivaji, in order to facilitate the conquest of the Deccan kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkunda. He, after receiving the consent of the Emperor, induced Shivaji to visit Agra. Shivaji was reluctant, yet Jai Singh gave him hopes of high rewards and in the end the Maratha Chief agreed. 12th May, 1666 A.D. was the day fixed for the audience of Shivaji with Emperor Aurangzeb.[4] On that day official rejoicings and celebrations took place with great pomp and show at Agra, for it was the first royal visit of the Emperor after the death of his father (Shahjahan), and also his 50th lunar birthday. Shivaji was advised to reach Agra a day earlier so that he might not miss the birthday celebrations. But unfortunately Shivaji reached on the 12th at about noon. He was rushed to the court without having been taught the court etiquette. This was the beginning of all the troubles. Even at the time of his arrival at Agra he was not properly received.[5] When he reached the royal court, the *Diwan-i-Am* reception was over and the

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[1] Bernier, p. 123.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 54-56; Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 59.

[3] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 54-56.

[4] Sarkar, *Shivaji*, pp. 131-33.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.

Emperor was in *Diwan-i-Khas*. Shivaji presented to Aurangzeb 1000 *Muhars* and 2000 rupees as *nazar* besides 5000 rupees as *nisar*. Aurangzeb did not speak a word of welcome or recognition of the gift. Shivaji was led back from the throne and was made to stand in the line of the *Panj-Hazari* mansabdars, that is the third row of the nobles. The work of the court *(darbar)* continued and Shivaji seems to have been forgotten.[1] He did not expect such behaviour on the part of the Emperor. He did not receive any present or title or robe of honour, not even a kind word. This annoyed Shivaji. He became very angry, turned his back and rudely walked away from the court.[2] Ram Singh, the elder son of Jai Singh, tried to pacify Shivaji; the party hostile to Jai Singh, and the officers and their relatives who had suffered at the hands of Shivaji, combined together to take revenge. They urged the Emperor to punish him for his open act of insolence and contumacy.[3]

Simultaneously, some pressure came from the harem too. Jahanara Begam had been enjoying the custom revenue of Surat which had been sacked by Shivaji in 1664 A.D. She was, therefore, vehemently opposed to the idea of a lenient and courtly treatment being accorded to Shivaji and constantly dinned into the ears of the Emperor, " . . . Who is this Shiva who could behave in your Royal presence with such contumacy and insolence ? Why did Your Majesty overlook his conduct ? If this goes on, many *Bhumia* (petty land-holders) will come here and act rudely. How could the government continue then ? The news will travel to every country that a Hindu displayed such audacious rudeness (with impunity) and all others will begin to be rude."[4]

Another lady, the wife of Jafar Khan, and the sister of Shayista Khan, also egged her husband on to avenge the murderous attack of Shivaji on her brother at Poona.[5]

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[1] Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 143; *Life and Times of Mirza Raja Jai Singh* by Dr. C.B. Tripathi (Thesis), p. 234.

[4] Jaipur Records (Hindi), Vol. IV, Part VI, pp. 14-17; Tr. p. 163; *Life and Times of Mirza Raja Jai Singh* by Dr. C.B. Tripathi (Thesis), p. 235; Sarkar, *Shivaji*, p. 143.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 143; *Life and Times of Mirza Raja Jai Singh* by Dr. C.B. Tripathi (Thesis), p. 235.

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Emperor Aurangzeb heard the outbursts of the harem patiently, thought over the problem, and in his privy council came to the decision that Shivaji should either be killed or imprisoned.[1]

It is difficult to ascertain how far Aurangzeb was influenced by the ladies of the harem. He appears too stern to have been influenced by them while taking decisions in such important political problems. There must have been some other facts and considerations which moved him to think so. Still, it cannot be totally rejected that the pressure exerted by the ladies had some effect on him.

The daughters of Aurangzeb also took active interest in the political matters and were not mere dummies.[2] In 1658 A.D., when the war of succession was going on between the brothers of Aurangzeb, his father-in-law, Shah Nawaz Khan, did not extend him any help. After the defeat of Dara, Aurangzeb got his father-in-law imprisoned. In the end, it was on the insistence of Zebunnisa Begam that Shah Nawaz Khan, her maternal grandfather, was released.[3] Similarly, when Prince Azam was punished (1701-5 A.D.) for quarrelling with the superintendent of his harem,[4] he sent the petition of pardon through his sister Padshah Begam.[5]

It appears that she had also an effective voice in matters of appointment. Once Aurangzeb wrote to her, recommending some name for a post, adding that if she did not approve of it, it should not be done.[6]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[2] It is found that Zebunnisa, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb, often appeared in the court with a veil on her face and assisted her father in his deliberations. (*Dewan of Zebunnisa* by Magan Lal, p. 13).

[3] *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, p. 49.

[4] "The Prince Azam had behaved badly towards Nurunnisa, the Mahaldar, so that he did not take her with himself (in his visits) to the Imperial garden at Ahmedabad. The Mahaldar sent a letter outside (the harem to me) forbidding the prince's journey. So, this slave (i.e. the writer) came and stopped the riding out of prince, in the absence of any order (from the Emperor). The prince expelled the Mahaldar from his assembly." When the Emperor heard it, he punished the prince. *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 71-72.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[6] *Ruqqat*, ff. 313a-313b. Similar other instances are also found. Once

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Zebunnisa was an ardent partisan of her younger brother Muhammad Akbar. She actively helped him during his rebellion in 1681 A.D. In the year 1679 A.D., the prince accompanied the Emperor (Aurangzeb) to Rajput wars in command of the advance division, and throughout the next year he had a full army corps under his command. Then he gave himself to evil advisers, rebelled against his father and proclaimed himself Emperor. He issued a manifesto deposing his father as a violater of Islamic law and even marched for a battle against him in 1681 A.D. During the course of the rebellion, the princess held a secret correspondence with him. When the rebellion failed and his deserted camp was seized by the Imperialists, her letters to him were discovered and she had to face the fury of her father's wrath. Her property and pension of four lakhs of rupees a year were confiscated and she was imprisoned at Salimgarh for the rest of her life where she died in 1702 A.D.[1]

Another daughter of Aurangzeb was Zinatunnisa Begam. He entrusted her with a very responsible task, the care of Maratha captives, the widow of Shambhaji and her son Shahu.[2] The Begam was born of the same mothers as Prince Akbar and entertained a tender feeling for Marathas who had been friendly to Akbar. She felt deep sympathy for Yesu Bai and her son.[3] She protected them from her father's wrath. In 1707 A.D., when Shahu went to the Deccan from the river Narmada, Zinatunnisa helped him considerably to facilitate his journey.[4] She might also have helped the release of Shahu and his mother when Balaji Vishwanath led an expedition against the Mughals in 1718 A.D. for their release.[5]

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she wrote to Aurangzeb regarding the pay of some officials to which Aurangzeb replied that he had informed the clerk accordingly. *Ruqqat*, f. 312b.

In another case, Aurangzeb wrote to her that if Hakim Abdulla was not trust-worthy, he should be removed and Kokazada should be promoted. *Ruqqat*, f. 312b.

[1] *M.A.*, p. 126; Sarkar, Vol. III, pp. 52, 54.

[2] *New History of the Marathas* by G.S. Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 350.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

It is said that Balaji was in secret correspondence with her and it was with her assistance that he guarded the interest of Shahu.[1]

Zinatunnisa sometimes acted as an intermediary also between the Emperor and the princes with regard to political matters. In 1691 A.D., the siege of Jinji started under the command of Asad Khan and his son Nusrat Jang. In 1693 A.D., Kam Bakhsh, the youngest son of Aurangzeb, was arrested for his opposition to the two generals and also for his intrigues with the enemy. When he arrived at the court (in 1693 A.D.) it was through the mediation of Zinatunnisa that he was granted interview with the Emperor in the harem.[2]

Another lady who played an active role during the reign of Aurangzeb was Sahib Ji, wife of Amir Khan, who was appointed governor of Kabul in 1678 A.D.[3] She was exceptionally accomplished and gifted with rare prudence and had a good grasp of current politics.[4] She was considered to be the *de facto* administrator of the province.[5] Her husband died all of a sudden in 1698 A.D. out in the valleys along with his troops. She did not lose her presence of mind and suppressed her grief for the moment; she dressed a man who resembled Amir Khan in the latter's clothes, seated him in a litter *(Palki)* and resumed the march. She herself inspected the troops and took salutes on the way. It was only after her arrival at Kabul,[6] that she broke the news of the tragedy and performed the funeral rites of her husband. Had the Afghans come to know of it before, not a single trooper from among the followers of the deceased governor would have escaped alive. In fact, when they heard of what had actually happened, they were filled with feelings of respect for the courage and resourcefulness of the lady and finally gave up their intention of raising their heads against her. When Aurangzeb heard of the death of Amir Khan and he felt concerned about the security of the North-West Frontier, one of his confidant nobles remarked,

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[1] *New History of the Marathas* by G.S. Sardesai, Vol. I, p. 355.

[2] *M.A.*, p. 217; *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, p. 79.

[3] Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 243.

[4] *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 250; Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 244.

[5] Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 114-115.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 115; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 251.

"Sir, may be, he is dead, but Sahib Ji is alive and the government is as safe in her hands as it was in those of her husband.[1] And verily she handled the delicate situation in that region with firmness and discretion till the arrival of Shah Alam, who had been appointed by his father as a Subedar of Kabul. Subsequently when she reached the Imperial camp, the Emperor overwhelmed her with kindness and permitted her to proceed to Mecca.

Thus even in the reign of a stern and strict ruler like Aurangzeb ladies did exert some influence in politics. Though it appears that Aurangzeb did not relish the idea of the interference of his harem, yet sometimes his sisters and daughters exerted some pressure, which he did not oppose.

There does not appear to be any lady who could take active interest in matters of politics during the reign of Bahadur Shah.

During the reign of Jahandar Shah, Lal Kunwar, the favourite concubine of the Emperor, asserted herself in the affairs of the Empire. She was a dancing girl and possessed no high credentials. Being a favourite of the Emperor she enjoyed some of the prerogatives of the Emperor.[2] She "was allowed to display the Imperial standard and march with drums beating as if she was the Emperor in person. Five hundred gentlemen-troopers (*ahadis*) followed in her train.[3] Naturally this led to the spread of many rumours. Her behaviour in the court became the talk of the town but probably some of them were exaggerated.[4] It

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[1] Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 114-117; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 251.

[2] Siyar, p. 385; Faruqi, f. 37a.

[3] S. Chandra, pp. 70-71.

[4] K. Khan, p. 690. One night when the Emperor and his favourite went out in a cart, they got drunk and arriving at the door, Lal Kunwar, without caring for the Emperor, in her drunkenness went to sleep. The Emperor was so drunk that he could not get up and remained in the cart. Later on when it was known, people rushed up and found the Emperor in the cart. This story is repeated by many others. Irvine also relates such stories (see pp. 195-97). Another story refers to the drowning of a boat at the wish of Lal Kunwar (Irvine, Vol. I, p. 192).

Nuruddin Faruqi says that at night musicians would gather in the palace. They would freely drink wine and being intoxicated, would

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is said that in the company of Lal Kunwar the Emperor spent most of his time in drinking, listening to music and merry-making.[1] Under her spell he neglected his duties and gave up regard for decorum which resulted in lowering and damaging the prestige of the Emperor.[2]

As was the practice during that period, the relatives of the queens received mansabs and titles. Some of the relatives of Lal Kunwar too, were ennobled and given mansabs, presents of elephants, horses, drums and jewels.[3] Three of her brothers received titles of *Niamat Khan*, *Namdar Khan* and *Khanzad Khan*.[4] Khushal Khan, one of her brothers, received the mansab of 7000; other brothers, Namdar Khan and Niamat Khan, got mansabs of 5000 each and the last named also received the Subedari of Multan.[5] Many other artists and musicians (*Kalawants*) received ranks and rewards.[6]

It was natural that the nobles and other officials felt humiliated at the special favour shown to a woman of low origin and the elevation of her relatives to a status of equality with them. Consequently, Lal Kunwar and her relatives were opposed by the Wazir Zulfiqar Khan, who did not relish the idea of filling places with her relatives.[7] He opposed the appointment of her brother as the Subedar of Multan[8] and even arrested

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shout and kick the Emperor. Even Lal Kunwar would do the same sometimes, and the Emperor would not utter a single word. Faruqi, ff. 37b, 38a; Irvine, Vol. I, p. 196.

Ashub gives the same description. Every sort of indecency was committed by the relatives of Lal Kunwar. (*Tarikh-i-Muhammad Shahi*, Vol. I, f. 35a).

[1] Faruqi, f. 37b; *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 1040; *Vir Vinod*, Vol. III, p. 1132; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 326.

[2] S. Chandra, p. 71.

[3] K. Khan (E. & D.) Vol. VII, p. 432; Kamwar, f. 337b; Faruqi, f. 37a; K. Khan, p. 689; *Vir Vinod*, Vol. III, p. 1132; S. Chandra, p. 72.

[4] Siyar, p. 385; Faruqi, f. 37a; Kamwar, f. 337b; Irvine, Vol. I, p. 193.

[5] Faruqi, f. 37a; Siyar, p. 385; *Vir Vinod*, Vol. III, p. 1132.

[6] Faruqi, f. 37b. Zohra a favourite of Lal Kunwar and a woman who kept a vegetable stall also got a jagir. (Siyar, p. 386; Irvine, Vol. I, p. 194).

[7] S. Chandra, p. 71.

[8] K. Khan, p. 689. Faruqi mentions the name of Niamat Khan and the Subedari of Multan (f. 37a). Siyar mentions the Subedari of Agra (p. 385).

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one of her brothers, Khushal Khan, for molesting a girl.[1] Besides this, there was another cause of hostility between the Wazir and Lal Kunwar. The perquisites from those who sought Imperial favour was a source of good income to the Wazir but now it was also appropriated by Lal Kunwar.[2]

A close scrutiny of all the developments related to Lal Kunwar and Jahandar Shah makes it clear that her influence on the Emperor was purely personal. Her charms appear to have been irresistible for him and it was under that spell that she could manage to get some advantageous and comfortable situation for her relatives. It is difficult to point out any such appointment made under her direct influence which was likely to effect the contemporary politics seriously. If she so wished, she might have succeeded in having a grip over the politics of the Empire, but it appears that she had neither the ability and intelligence nor any such desire. Thus her influence was confined only to some financial gains for favourites and nothing more.

During 1712-13 A.D. Farrukh Siyar's mother played a fairly significant role in politics. After the death of her husband in 1712 A.D., she helped her desperate son in securing the throne. He was refused co-operation from every quarter. Husain Ali Khan, one of the Sayyid brothers, who exercised great influence during the period, was also reluctant to assist him. Ultimately it was Farrukh Siyar's mother who exerted pressure on Husain Ali to espouse the cause of her son.[3] She requested him to extend his help by making him realise that, in the long run, he would be a gainer.[4] Not only this, she went to the mother of Husain Ali who called her son and persuaded him and Husain Ali agreed to join Farrukh Siyar.[5] Later on, upon her mother's recommendation, Farrukh Siyar made Muhammad Murad Kashmiri, who was related to his mother and had long been in the Imperial service his associate, and gave him the title of *Vikalat Khan* along with a mansab of 1000.[6]

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[1] Siyar, p. 386; Ashub, Vol. I, f. 35a, says, women are often molested by rich persons, nobles etc.

[2] S. Chandra, p. 73.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Irvine, Vol. I, p. 206; S. Chandra, p. 91.

[6] K. Khan, p. 791.

During the reign of Muhammad Shah his mother Nawab Qudsia Begam played a significant role. She helped her sons in occupying the throne. She manipulated things in such a manner that the Sayyid brothers, who were exercising power at that time, could not suspect her actions.[1] She bestowed dresses of honour on those officials who came to fetch her son[2] and warned others, who were the supporters of her husband, not to meet her, thus avoiding the suspicion of the Sayyids.[3] She tried to get her son freed from the tutelage of the Sayyids[4] and sent messages to Nizam-ul-Mulk, a very prominent noble, asking him to liberate them (mother and son) from the grip of the Sayyids.[5]

The second lady who played a significant role in politics during the first half of the reign of Muhammad Shah, was Koki Jiu who was one of the most conspicuous figures of the time. She was the daughter of a geomancer, Jan Muhammad.[6] Her actual name was Rahmatunnisa but, later on, she was known as Koki Jiu because both she and the Emperor had been suckled by the same mother.[7] She learnt reading and writing quickly and also became conversant with the etiquette of the harem by moving in the society of the ladies of the harem.[3] She had free access to the palace. She could also foretell the future. Nawab Qudsia, the mother of the Emperor, was much influenced by her.[9] She was, no doubt, a clever woman and a persuasive conversationalist.

Soon after the accession of Muhammad Shah she received honours. The Emperor confided in her and utilised her services for establishing contact with the outside world.[10] But in first two years of his reign during which the Sayyid brothers swayed the Imperial council and Muhammad Amin Khan, the Wazir, was alive, Koki Jiu remained in the background. It was after the downfall of the former and the death of the latter that she came into prominence.[1]

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[1] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[5] S. Chandra, p. 157.
[6] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 45a.
[7] *Ibid.*, f. 46a.
[8] *Ibid.*, f. 45b.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] K. Khan, p. 940; *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 606.

It is said that the Emperor put so much confidence in her that the Royal Seal was entrusted to her which she was permitted to imprint on state documents.[2] Many people used to approach her and gain advancement through her.[3] For this Koki Jiu used to make presents and bribes known as *Peshkash* from them.[4] In this task she was assisted by one of her friends, Roshan-ud-daulah Zafar Khan. She convinced the Emperor of the loyalty of Roshan-ud-daulah and he received the mansab of 7000 and also became the *Bakshi* of the *Ahadis*.[5] It was with his collaboration that *Peshkash* and presents were procured. Another person, who supported Koki Jiu, was Khwaja Khidmatgar, the Nazir-i-harem,[6] but it is said that he was averse to bribe and hence fell out of her group.[7]

She was also supported by Shah Abdul Gaffar, a *darvesh*, who became very popular in the harem through his art of magic.[8] Along with Koki Jiu he collected fair measure of wealth as *Peshkash*. All these three persons used to interfere in state matters and create obstacles.[9] The power of the Emperor was reduced by these powerful self-seekers. It seems some part of the *Peshkash* collected by them was also given to the Emperor.[10] Soon after, Koki Jiu and the Wazir Nizam-ul-mulk came in conflict with each other. Nizam-ul-mulk was keen to reform the administration and thereby prove his competence and devotion.[11] He wanted to restore financial stability by abolishing the practice of bribe. But his scheme floundered because they cut at the very root of the illegal gains of interested parties, particularly Koki Jiu and her favourites.[1] When, therefore, he found that the Emperor would not stop Koki's interference in state affairs, he ceased to offer his advice to him.[2] Towards the end of 1732 A.D. Koki Jiu started losing her influence. Khidmatgar Khan died the same year and the other members of her group again fell in disgrace. Roshan-ud-daulah was charged of embezzlement and one of Koki Jiu's brothers, Ali Mardan Khan, gave offence by his conduct. Thus she lost her hold over the Emperor.[3]

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[1] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 264.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 265.

[3] K. Khan (E. & D.) Vol. VIII, p. 523; Ashub, Vol. I, f. 46a; *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 606; Irvine, Vol. II, p. 131.

[4] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 479. Muhammad Khan Bangash, on his appointment to the government of Malwa, paid to Koki Jiu one lakh of rupees. Irvine, Vol. II, p. 265.

[5] Irvine, Vol. II.

[6] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 48b.

[7] S. Chandra, p. 213.

[8] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 65b.

[9] *Ibid*., 66a.

[10] *Ibid*., f. 48a; Irvine, Vol. II, p. 265.

[11] K. Khan (E. & D.) Vol. VII, p. 523.

In the post Aurangzeb period we come across a set of women different from those of the preceding period. Instead of the queens, princesses or the wives of some high nobles and state officers belonging either to the Mughal or Rajput families, there emerge into prominence concubines of low origin, highly ambitious, scheming, self-centred, pursuing unabashed their interests, taking advantage of political crises, of social and intellectual deterioration, spreading their tantacles for grasping power and pelf and thus undermining, beyond all possibility of repair, whatever little Imperial prestige was still left over. It also appears that some of the ladies were anxious to bolster up the tottering power of the Emperor. Since they could not do it openly, they did it secretly.

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[1] S. Chandra, p. 174.

[2] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 265. This bitterness against her led him to compose a quartrain, the last line of which is "Today a filthy women is in the place of Alamgir." Irvine, Vol. II, p. 265.

[3] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 270.

4

PRIVILEGES ENJOYED BY THE LADIES OF ROYALTY

THE LADIES of royalty enjoyed an exalted position in the Mughal Court. They were considered so influential that many persons succeeded in approaching the Emperor through them. They used to recommend the petitions made to the Emperor. Their recommendations usually carried weight.

Titles

To enhance the prestige of these ladies honorific titles were given to some of them. Usually they were addressed by these titles. The mother of Akbar enjoyed the title of "Miriam Makani" (The Mary of both the worlds).[1] Jahangir's mother was known as "Maryamus-Zamani" (The Mary of the Universe).[2] Likewise, mother of Shahjahan was given the title of "Bilqis-Makani" (The lady of pure abode.).[3]

But the most popular and well known title was enjoyed by Mehrunnisa. In the year 1611 A.D. Jahangir conferred upon her the title of "Nur Mahal" (The light of the palace) and later on, the title of "Nurjahan" (The light of the world).[4] The latter title became so popular that her real name was completely thrown into the background. She was also known as "Shah Begam" (The Kingly lady).[5]

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 815.

[2] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 76.

[3] Qazwini, ff. 13a, 49a.

[4] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I. p. 319.

[5] *Iqbal Nama*, p. 56. The Rajput wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (mother of Prince Khusru) named, Man Bai, was also given the title of 'Shah Begam' by the Emperor. See *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 55-56.

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The beloved wife of Shahjahan, in whose memory the famous Taj Mahal was erected, was popularly known as "Mumtaz Mahal" (exalted one of the palace) but her real name was Arjumand Banu Begam. She enjoyed the title of "Malika-i-Jahan" (The lady of the world). After her death in 1631 A.D. the place of honour was transferred to Jahanara and the title of "Sahibat-uz-Zamani" (Mistress of the age) was conferred on her.[1] She also enjoyed the title of "Padshah Begam."[2] She was usually known as Begam Saheb.[3]

The title of "Padshah Begam" was again enjoyed by Zinatunnisa, the second daughter of Aurangzeb.[4] The wives of Aurangzeb were commonly known by the name of the place they came from, such as Aurangabadi Mahal, Udaipuri Mahal etc.[5] It seems he did not relish the idea of conferring high titles on his wives. In the later period, Lal Kunwar, the favourite queen of Jahandar Shah, was given the title of "Imtiaz Mahal" (The chosen of the palace).[6] Similarly the mother of Muhammad Shah enjoyed the title of "Hasrat Begam" (The exalted lady).[7] His wife was given the title of "Malika-i-Zamani" (Queen of the world).[8]

Besides these title the ladies of royalty enjoyed epithets of respect and sometimes some dignified and glamorous surnames. From the reign of Akbar onwards the ladies of the harem were usually called Begams.[9]

Allowances and Maintenance Grants

The ladies of the Mughal harem were given regular allowances and maintenance grants to meet their personal expenditure. On occasions they also received presents from the Emperor for the purchase of perfumes, betels and other sundry articles.[10] Usually one half of the amount of allowance was paid in cash from the

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[1] *M.A.*, p. 213; Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 58.
[2] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 127; Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 58.
[3] Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 58.
[4] *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, p. 72; Irvine, Vol. I, p. 2.
[5] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 63.
[6] Faruqi, f. 37a; Kamwar, f. 337b; Siyar, p. 385.
[7] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 27b.
[8] *Ibid.*, f. 20b; *Vir Vinod*, Vol. III, p. 1142.
[9] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 333. He also gives a list of their names.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 375.

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royal exchequer and the other half was given to them in the form of assignment of land the revenue of which usually yielded more than the required amount.[1] Sometimes the jagirs assigned to them used to be fairly large. The parganas which were thus assigned to Begams were known as *Burgbah*.[2]

In the Mughal period the practice of granting parganas to the ladies of the Mughal harem was started by Babur who bestowed a pargana worth seven lakhs of rupees on the mother of Ibrahim Lodi.[3] He also assigned some places and holdings to the daughters of Abu Said Mirza in the plain country.[4]

After his accession, Humayun visited his mother and sister and gave them jagirs.[5] The Afghan ruler Sher Shah made a grant of two parganas to Bibi Fateh Malika, the wife of Mustafa Farmuli, for her support.[6] There is no positive information about such grants being made in the time of Akbar. But this does not mean that the practice was discontinued.[7]

There appears to have been a positive rise in the allowances of the ladies of the harem in the time of Jahangir. Soon after his accession in 1605 A. D., he raised the allowances of all the veiled ladies of the royal harem from 20 percent to 100 percent according to their condition and relationship.[8] The practice of granting land to the ladies seems to have been freely followed by Jahangir.[9]

His royal consort Nurjahan, enjoyed a number of jagirs which were spread all over the Empire. Her jagir of Ramsar was situated about 20 miles south-east of Ajmer.[1] In the year 1617 A. D. Jahangir received the happy news of the victory of Imperial forces under Prince Khurram in the Deccan and on this auspicious occasion he presented to Nurjahan the pargana of Toda as jagir, the annual revenue of which was rupees 2,00,000.[2]

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[1] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 375.

[2] *Mirat-ul-Istila* by Anand Ram, f. 15a.

[3] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 478.

[4] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 89.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[6] *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* by Abbas Khan (E. & D.) Vol. IV., p. 355; *Sher Shah* by K.R. Qanungo, p. 111.

[7] Monserrate (pp. 166-67) informs that Gulbadan Begam had given Butzaris to Portuguese during her stay in Surat when she was leaving for Mecca. She then aimed at securing their friendship. After her return she did not want to remain on good terms with them and demanded it back. Portuguese felt annoyed at this and committed outrage.

[8] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 10.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 46. "I ordered Haji Koka, who was one of my father's foster-sisters to bring before me in the palace such women as were worthy to be presented with lands and money."

In addition to the allowances and land grants, Nurjahan enjoyed some exceptional honours and prerogatives on account of her privileged position. In 1622 A. D., when her father Itimad-ud-daula died, all his belongings and establishments were transferred to her and she was also allowed to enjoy the exceptional privilege of having her drums and orchestra sounded after those of the Emperor.[3] Not only that, she is also reported to have received the right of collecting octroi duty at Sikandarabad on the merchandise coming from Bengal and Bhutan.[4]

Emperor Shahjahan appears to have continued the practice of making grants and giving allowances to the ladies of royalty. Immediately after he ascended the throne, he granted maintenance allowance of rupees two lakhs a year to Nurjahan. He settled an allowance of rupees ten lakhs on Mumtaz Mahal.[5] But the greatest beneficiary of this royal favour was Jahanara, who was also known as Begam Saheb. The jagirs granted to her included the villages of Achchol.[6] Farjahara[7] and the Sarkars of Bachchol[8], Safapur[9] and Doharah.[10] On the occasion of inaugural of the twenty third year of the reign of Shahjahan, she was further granted the pargana of Panipat the annual revenue of which was one crore *dams*.[1] In addition to this, she was also granted the revenue of the city of Surat, one of the most prosperous commercial towns of the Empire, for her sundry expenses.[2] She was a favourite child of Shahjahan and after the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal all his affection appears to have centred round Jahanara. She used to look after her father and her annual allowance of six lakhs of rupees was raised to ten lakhs of rupees.[3] In addition to this, she received many precious stones and gifts on auspicious occasions and thus had accumulated immense riches.[4] It is reported that she had an annual income of nearly three millions of rupees.[5]

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[1] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 342.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 380, refers it as Boda which seems to be a mistake. The India Office Manuscript and Munshi Debi Prasad in his Hindi version refer to it as Toda.

[3] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 228.

[4] De Laet, p. 41; Pelsaert, p. 4.

[5] Lahori, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 96-97.

[6] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 626; Lahori, Vol. I, Part II, p. 51, also Vol. II, Part I, p. 209. The name of the village was changed into Begamabad according to Qazwini and Sahababad according to Lahori.

[7] Lahori, Vol. II, Part II, p. 582.

[8] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 626; Lahori, Vol. I, Part II, p. 51, also Vol. II, Part I, p. 209.

[9] Lahori, Vol. II, p. 426.

[10] Doharah was given to her for the expenses of her garden. *Ruqqat-i-Alamgiri*, p. 77.

In spite of the fact that Jahanara was a partisan of Dara Shukoh, Aurangzeb treated her with grace, dignity and utmost respect and continued her personal allowance. He was faced with so many problems that soon after his accession he effected economy in administration. But so far as Jahanara was concerned, he did not make any reduction in her allowance. Instead, in the year 1666 A. D., on the auspicious occasion of *Id* he presented her one lakh of gold coins and increased her allowance by five lakhs of rupees and thus made it seventeen lakhs of rupees per year.[6]

In the reign of Jahandar Shah, Lal Kunwar is reported to have received an allowance of two crores of rupees for her household expenses apart from jewels and clothes.[7] A sum of fifteen thousand rupees monthly was set apart for the expenses of Nawab Qudsia, the mother of Muhammad Shah and those of the other women of harem.[8]

Such maintenance allowances were not confined to persons of royal family. The wives of the nobles also enjoyed this privilege.[9]

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[1] *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 109.

[2] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 65.

[3] Qazwini, Vol. II, f. 240 and Vol. III, f. 449.

[4] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 216; Bernier, p. 11.

[5] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 216.

[6] *M.A.*, p. 36.

[7] Irvine, Vol. I, p. 194.

[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 4.

[9] It is reported by Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan that Aurangzeb

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These grants and allowances were continued during the pleasure of the Emperor and sometimes they were also confiscated when the beneficiary of such a grant or allowance annoyed the Emperor by her actions and behaviour.[1]

Officials under the Ladies of the Imperial Harem

In order to look after the management of their various jagirs and grants, the ladies of the Imperial harem appointed their own officials and servants. Manucci informs that each lady of rank had a Nazir who used to look after her property, land and income.[2]

Nurjahan had her own Vakils[3] who looked after her jagirs. Hakim Hamam and the son of Hakim Kashi served as Diwans in the Sarkars of Nawab Mumtaz Begam.[4] Ishaq Beg was Mir-i-Saman of Mumtaz Mahal and later on he was appointed Mir-i-Saman of Begam Saheb (Jahanara).[5] He held a mansab in the Sarkar of Jahanara yielding seven hundred rupees to which two hundred rupees were added afterwards.[6] Later on she promoted him to the position of Diwan and gave him the title of *Hakikat Khan.*[7] In 1681 A.D., Saiyed Ashraf was appointed Mir-i-Saman of Begam Saheb and was given the

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went to the house of Khalilullah Khan, the Subedar of Lahore, after the latter's death and gave "an annual stipend of fifty thousand of rupees to his widow Hamida Bano." *M.A.*, p. 23.

[1] In 1681 A.D., when Prince Akbar rebelled, Princess Zebunnisa was in close correspondence with him. She was suspected of conspiring against the Emperor and was deprived of her annual pension ofrupees four lakhs and her property was also confiscated. *M.A.*, p. 126.

In 1687 A.D., the property of Nurunnisa Begam, the favourite wife of Shah Alam (Aurangzeb's second son), was escheated and she was deprived of all her liberty. She was suspected of being in complicity with her husband who carried on a secret correspondence with Qutb Shah, the ruler of Golkunda, during the siege of Golkunda and also received presents from him and thus introduced laxity in military preparation. Sarkar, Vol. III, pp. 46-47.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 350-51.

[3] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 192.

[4] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 458; *History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by Dr. B.P. Saksena, p. vi.

[5] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 449.

[6] Lahori, Vol. II, Part I, p. 104.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

title of Khan.[1] Sadullah *Khan* was the *Mir-i-Saman* (steward) of *Padshah Begam* (Zinatunnisa).[2] These officials, along with other male attendants, were lodged at a convenient distance from the harem so that they could be contacted easily.[3]

Grants of Dresses and other Presents made by the Ladies

The ladies of the Mughal court not only received presents and grants but some of them also awarded dresses of honour and other presents to distinguished nobles and generals. On the occasion of Humayun's accession to the throne in 1530 A.D., his mother Mahim Begam gave a great feast and, when it was over, she granted special robes of honour to about seven thousand persons.[4] Not only that, she also presented a number of camels, mules, horses etc. to those present on the auspicious occasion.[5] This practice was followed on a grand scale by Nurjahan because of her privileged position. When the long drawn out affair with Mewar came to a conclusion in 1614 A.D. and Rana Amar Singh of Mewar submitted to the Imperial army, his son Prince Karan came to the Imperial court. In addition to the various presents he received from the Emperor, he was favoured with a rich dress of honour, a jewelled sword, a horse with saddle and an elephant by Nurjahan.[6] Three years later, in 1617 A.D., when Khurram was given the title of *Shahjahan* on his success in the Deccan wars, Nurjahan was exultant with joy, threw out a feast of victory and conferred on him dresses of honour of great value and a number of other presents. She also made valuable presents to his children, ladies of his harem and to his chief servants. She spent about thirty thousand rupees on this occasion.[7] The beneficiaries of

[1] *M.A.*, p. 127.

[2] Irvine, Vol. I, p. 227.

[3] Bayazid informs that in Ushturgardan Talgulgu Burj the officials and Khwaja Sara of Nawab Gul Chehra Begam, Gulbadan Begam, Miriam Makani Begam, and Mah Chuchak Begam, used to reside. *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-Wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 210.

[4] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 114. Evidence lacks to disprove the figures quoted; but all the same the figures appear fantastic.

[5] *Iqbal Nama*, p. 105.

[6] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 277-78.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 397 mentions "Nurjahan Begam prepared a feast of

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such presents were not only the royal dignitaries; nobles of the court and faithful servants also enjoyed similar presents made on such auspicious occasions.[1]

The privilege of making such grants was enjoyed by Jahanara as well. She used to present *Khilats* to foreign ambassadors,[2] nobles and dignitaries of the court on various auspicious occasions.[3] This practice continued even in the later period. At the time of the accession of Muhammad Shah in 1719 A.D., when the officials came to fetch him, Nawab Qudsiya, his mother, bestowed dresses of honour upon them.[4]

Farmans, Sanads, Nishans and Parwanas

The right of issuing Imperial *farmans* was the exclusive privilege of the Emperor. The only exception to this rule is found in the case of Nurjahan who shared this privilege with Jahangir and exercised her right of issuing *farmans,* though very rarely.[5] In addition to *farmans*, there were other important official documents, like *Hasbul-Hukm*, which were issued by

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victory for my son Khurram and conferred on him dresses of honour of great price, with a *nadiri* with embroidered flower, adorned with rare pearls, a *sarpich* (turban ornament) decorated with rare gems, a turban with a fringe of pearls, a waistbelt studded with pearls, a sword with jewelled *pardala* (belt), a *phul katara* (dagger), a *Sada* (?) of pearls with two horses, one of which had a jewelled saddle and a special elephant with two females. In the same way she gave his children and his ladies, dresses of honour, *tirquz* (nine pieces) of cloth with all sorts of gold ornaments, and to his chief servants as presents a horse, a dress of honour and a jewelled dagger. The cost of this entertainment was about 3,00,000 rupees."

[1] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 221. On the lunar weighing ceremony of Jahangir in 1621 A.D. Nurjahan gave dresses of honour to forty-five great Amirs and private servants.

[2] Begam Saheb gave Rs. 15000 and a *Khilat* to the ambassador of Rume, Zulfiqar Khan. *Amal-i-Saleh,* Vol. III, p. 188.

[3] On the occasion of Dara's marriage she gave embroidered *Khilats* to Asaf Khan and other nobles. Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 500.

She also distributed *Khilats* on the marriage of Prince Shuja. Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 507.

[4] Irvine, Vol. II, p. 4.

[5] *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 435. "In addition to giving her the titles that other kings bestow, the Emperor granted Nurjahan the

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the prime ministers, *Nishans* which were issued by the princes of the royal blood and *Sanads* and *Parwanas* which were issued by other competent officials of the court. It was in very exceptional cases that official documents such as *Hukums, Sanads, Nishans*[1] and *Parwanas* were issued by a Queen or a Princess. This exceptional privilege was allowed only to those who held the highest rank in the Imperial harem such as Hamida Banu Begam,[2] Maryam-uz-Zamani,[3] Nurjahan and Jahanara.

It is interesting to note that the *farmans* and *nishans* issued were not applicable to their own jagirs alone ; still their scope appears to be somewhat limited. Whatever *farmans* of these ladies are found, they do not possess much political value. Important matters like appointment, transfer and dismissal etc. are not dealt in them. Small favours and minor matters such as payment of debt etc. were often referred to the royal ladies who possessed their own jagirs. Consequently they issued orders to grant such requests.

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rights of Sovereignty and Government. Sometimes she would sit in the balcony of her palace while the nobles would present themselves and listen to her dictates. Coin was struck in her name with this superscription 'By order of King Jahangir gold has a hundred splendours added to it by receiving the impression of the name of Nurjahan, the Queen Begam.' On all *farmans* also, receiving the Imperial signature, the name of 'Nurjahan—the Queen Begam', was jointly attached." *Tatimma-i-wakiat-i-Jahangiri* by Muhammad Hadi (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 398. Coins were struck in her name and the Royal Seal on *farmans* bore her signature. Beni Prasad, pp. 193-194. For specimen of Nurjahan's other *farmans* see Appendix 'A'.

[1] For *Nishans* from Nurjahan and Jahanara see Appendix 'B' & 'C'. Some *Nishans* were also issued by Nadira Banu Begam, the wife of Dara. *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans Addressed by Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, pp. 32, 35.

[2] *Imperial Farmans* by K.M. Jhaveri. *Farman* No. 3 refers to an order issued by Hamida Banu, mother of Emperor Akbar, in which she granted permission to Vithal, a Brahmin of the pargana of Mahavan in the Sarkar of Agra, to graze his cows freely. Though it is a *Hukum*, it has been written in the style of a *Farman*. For details see Appendix 'D'.

[3] *I.H.R.C.*, Vol. VIII, 1925, pp. 167-169. There is an order issued by Maryam-uz-Zamani in favour of one Mudabbir Beg to restore the jagir which was usurped by one Surajmal at the pargana Chaupala (Modern Moradabad). For details see Appendix 'E'.

Royal Seal

It was the privilege of the Queens to seal the Imperial *Farmans*. Therefore, the Royal Seal, which was a round, small seal and was known by the Chaghtai name of *Uzuk*, remained, as a rule, in the Imperial harem.[1] It was used for *Farman-i-Sabti* relating to titles, high appointments, jagirs and sanction of large sums. In the time of Shahjahan, after the death of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal the seal was given to Begam Saheb (Jahanara).[2]

In addition to the Royal Seal which was used for matters concerning the Empire, a separate seal was used for all matters connected with the female apartment.[3]

Commercial Activities of the Ladies of Royalty

The trade and commerce of the Mughal period was generally conducted by business community of this country, but there are some instances of Royal princes and princesses as well as some nobles of the state taking keen interest in this field.[4] Though in general, trade and commerce was never a very favourite occupation of the ladies, much less of the ladies of the royalty; yet during the Mughal period some ladies seem to have been attracted towards it just because a very prosperous foreign trade was flourishing in the country. Indian ships were plying freely in Arabian Sea and were carrying from India textile fabrics, pepper, spices, ginger, dyes, opium, etc. to Western Asia (Arabia, Africa, Persia)[5] and brought wines, perfumes, brocade, China-goods, gold, silver, ivory, amber, pearls, horses, etc.[1] Curiously enough, the Persian chronicles are silent about this affair.

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[1] Monserrate, p. 209. In very exceptional cases the seal was maintained by some very reliable noble. It was only a favour to queen Mumtaz Mahal that it was for some time given to her father, who also happened to be the Prime Minister of the Empire, See *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* by Ibn Hasan p. 102; *History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by Dr. B.P. Saksena, p. 65.

[2] *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* by Ibn Hasan, p. 102. Qazwini says, "Like her mother she entrusted the seal to Sati Khanam who looked after her. Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 449.

[3] *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* by Ibn Hasan, p. 100.

[4] *Commercial Activities of the Mughal Emperor During the Seventeenth Century* by Dr. Satish Chandra (Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 22nd Session, 1959), pp. 264-69.

[5] Pant, p. 106.

The interest of the ladies of royalty in commercial activities led them to have their own 'Junks' (a ship of the distinctive Chinese built with bow and stern shaped alike). Some of them were as heavy as 1200 tons. One such Junk was maintained by the mother of Jahangir[2] who was a great adventurer in the field of commerce. Her ships carried on brisk trade between Surat and the ports on the Red Sea. William Finch says, "The Emperor's mother, or others acting under her protection, carried on extensive trading operations and at this time a vessel belonging to her was being laden (with indigo) for a voyage to Mokha."[3] Similarly John Jourdain informs that Khwaja Abdul Hasan ". . . alledginge unto him (Captain Hawkins) that he had sent to Biana to buy the indigo out of the Queen Mother's hand, her factor having made price for it. . . . "[4] One of the ships belonging to the Queen Mother was known as *Rahimi*.[5] It often carried its cargo to Mocha.[6] Once in 1614 A.D. this ship (Rahimi) was captured by the Portuguese which ultimately resulted into a war with them.[7]

Nurjahan Begam also was interested in commercial activities. She maintained a number of ships and took interest in the foreign trade.[8] She 'dabbled' in indigo and embroidered cloth trade.[9] The chief agent of Nurjahan was Asaf Khan. "The one and twentieth at this instant, came unto me from Asaph Chan . . . in the name of Nur Mahal that she had mouded the price for another 'Firman' and that she had obtained it and was ready to send down her servant with that to see and take order for our good establishment that she would see that wee should not bee wronged."[1] The main reason for the above mentioned favour to the English was that she was eager to send her goods on English ships as her goods could not go out of India on account of bad relations between the Mughals and the Portuguese.[2] Later on she also became the protector of English goods.[3] Semetimes the shippers and the goods only owned by her and the ship was hired from some other owner.[4] She had established trade relations with the Portuguese of Daman and Due who were carrying on brisk trade between India and the western countries.[5] Sometimes there used to arise complications due to the interference of the Emperor, his mother and wife all 'trading on their own accounts.'[6]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 107; *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* by Moreland, p. 209.

[2] *Letters Received by the East India Company*, Vol. II (1613-15), p. 213; *Journal of John Jourdain*, pp. 186, 209.

[3] *Early Travels*, p. 123.

[4] *Journal of John Jourdain*, pp. 155-56.

[5] By mistake Jourdain calls it sometimes Beheme. *Journal of John Jourdain*, pp. 186, 191, 209.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56, 209.

[7] *Letters Received by the East India Campany*, Vol. II (1613-15), p. 213; *Bhartiya Vyapar Ka Itihas* by K.D. Bajpai, p. 236.

[8] *The Economic History of India* by R.K. Mukerji, p. 83.

[9] Pant, p. 165.

This tradition was maintained by Jahanara Begam, the favourite daughter of Shahjahan who used to carry on trade on her own account,[7] and also owned a number of ships. She entered into friendly commercial relations with the Dutch and the English and, with their help, carried on extensive commercial activities and made enormous profits.[8]

Contacts with the Outside World

In general all correspondence and negotiations with foreign countries and foreign dignitaries were usually the concern of the Mughal Emperor and his court officials, but certain instances indicate that sometimes the ladies of the royalty also enjoyed the privilege of receiving letters and personal gifts from dignitaries of the foreign countries.

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[1] *Travels in India in Seventeenth Century* by Roe and Fryer, p. 144.

[2] Pant, p. 164.

[3] *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mughal*, Vol. II, pp. 436, 444.

[4] *The Economic History of India* by R.K. Mukerji, p. 83; *English Factory Records* (1622-23), p. 204, mentions, "In 1622 the English seized many Indian ships returning from Mocha (in Red Sea lies inside the straits of Bab-el-Mandal or farther north at Jidda in the port of Mecca) with a view to put pressure on the Emperor for opening the Red Sea trade with them. One of which "the shipper and goods only belonged to the King, Normall (Nur Mahal). . . . "

[5] *English Factory Records* (1618-1621), p. 81. Nurjahan's junks paid custom to the Portuguese.

[6] Pant, p. 164.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[8] *English Factory Records* (1642-45), p. 148. One junk was also built for her.

In the time of Akbar, Mir Mohammad Masum Bhakkari was sent on an embassy to Shah Abbas of Persia and, when he returned, he brought a letter from Shah's aunt for Miriam Makani.[1] Nurjahan, the royal consort of Jahangir, received a letter from the mother of Imam Quli Khan, the ruler of Turan, containing expression of good-will and dues of acquaintanceship.[2] Along with that letter she also sent some rarities from her country. In response, Nurjahan sent a return embassy under Khwaja Nasir to Samarqand who carried with him choicest gifts from India for the mother of the Turani ruler.[3]

Thus, the ladies of the royalty sometimes enjoyed the privilege of coming into contact with the royal ladies of the foreign countries and contributed to the development of good-will and mutual understanding between India and various countries of Western Asia.

Respect and Honour enjoyed by the Ladies of Royalty

The Mughals had high regard for the ladies. They are described as gentle, good-hearted, hospitable and honest. One never hears of their ill-treatment with their wives and children, and they were particularly devoted to their families. The older members of the family were held in great esteem and their wish or advice was usually followed.[4]

When the Mughals came to India, they continued to treat their ladies with utmost regard. They often went to pay their respect to them and treated them with all courtesy and kindness and spared no pains to make them comfortable. In this direction the lead was given by Babur, the first of the Mughal rulers in India, who had a highly developed sense of respect for the ladies. He had a great affection for his aunts and other elderly ladies of the harem and often used to visit them personally, sometimes even without caring for the severity of the weather.[1] He made suitable grants of land for the construction of their residences and ordered Khwaja Qasim, an architact, to build palaces according to their individual likings.[2] Not only that, Babur was very courteous to the ladies of the harem and he also used to move out of his capital in order to receive them. Once when his paternal aunts, Fakhar-i-Jahan Begam and Khadiza Sultan Begam, arrived at the capital, he "went above Sikanderabad to wait on them."[3] He was so particular about it that he, sometimes, even in the absence of a proper conveyance, marched on foot to receive them.[4]

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 1251.

[2] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 205.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *History of the Mughals* by H. H. Howorth, Part IV, pp. 38-39.

Humayun was, by nature, a very affectionate man. He had great regard for the ladies. He was particularly fond of his sisters whom he often remembered during his illness.[5] After he ascended the throne in 1530 A.D. he went to pay respects to his mothers and sisters and also enquired about their health. He consoled them at the sad bereavement of his father and granted them jagirs.[6] After that, he often used to go to the residence of Gulbadan Begam where all the ladies of the harem used to assemble.[7]

It appears that his boundless affection and personal attention to the comforts of his mothers and sisters aroused jealousy in his wives, and Bega Begam protested against his neglect of the wives. But Humayun explained the situation and finally

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[1] Once when Babur went to visit Mahim Begam, she asked him not to stir out during the hot season. To this Babur replied, "Mahim, it is astonishing that you should say such things. The daughters of Abu Said Mirza have been deprived of fathers and brothers. If I do not cheer them how shall it be done ?" *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 97-98.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[3] *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 558, also pp. 301, 616, 686. Gulbadan Begam writes that hearing the news of the arrival of Begams from Kabul to Agra "My Royal father went as far as Naugram to give honourable reception to my dearest lady (Khanzada Begam)." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 103.

[4] According to Gulbadan Begam, when Mahim Begam came from Kabul to Hindustan, Babur had decided to go to Kul Jalali (Aligarh) to meet her, but she had arrived earlier. Hearing this "My Royal father did not wait for a horse to be saddled but set out on foot." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 100-101.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

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succeeded not only in removing this feeling from their hearts, but also in obtaining from them in writing that he had not been neglecting them.[1] When he conquered Kabul in 1545 A.D., his mother Dildar Begam and sisters Gulchehra Begam and Gulbadan Begam went to him to congratulate him on his success. He was so pleased with their visit that he organised festivities in their honour.[2]

When Akbar the Great ascended the throne he continued the tradition of his predecessors with regard to the respect which was to be given to the ladies of the harem. He treated Miriam Makani with great respect[3] and used to move out of the capital to receive her.[4] He was also equally respectful to his aunt and treated her with great kindness.[5]

Jahangir was equally conscious of his duties towards the ladies of the harem. He had a very high regard for his mother and often used to move out of his palace to receive her.[6] It was not that he alone respected his mother, but he expected the same from his son as well. After the submission of Rai Karan when Khurram was honoured, Jahangir asked him to go and wait on his mothers.[7] He also had a deep affection and regard for his sister Shakarunnisa whom he loved and respected as much as his mother.[8] His love for Nurjahan is well-known. He had so much regard for her feelings that he cut down the

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[1] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 130-131.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 178.

[3] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 541, 901. Abul Fazl writes that once, when the royal camp was at Behat, it was announced to Akbar that the litter of Miriam Makani was close by. "He was much delighted (at this news) and made arrangements for doing her honour." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 348, Vol. II, p. 86.

He further writes that when Miriam Makani arrived at Delhi in 1585, "His Majesty was delighted at this news and he received her and brought her with all respects to her lodging." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 709; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 224, 512.

[4] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 881.

[5] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 91. Abul Fazl writes, "He visited the abode of Haji Begam and paid his devotion (to her) . . . " *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 541.

[6] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 76, 131.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 277.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 36.

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number of his wine cups at her insistence.[1] She enjoyed his utmost confidence. Once when he fell ill in 1614 A.D., he did not convey this news to anyone for the fear that the news might break unnecessary panic and upset the whole administrative machinery. It was Nurjahan who was taken into full confidence by him and was informed of his indisposition.[2]

Jahangir was succeeded by his son Shahjahan who ascended the throne in 1628 A.D. He lost his mother early in March, 1619 A.D. Incidentally, almost all the elderly ladies directly related to Shahjahan had passed away one after the other. Therefore, his affection and respect centered round his wife, Mumtaz Mahal Begam. Her utmost devotion and affection for her husband is proved by the fact that she accompanied her husband through thick and thin and faced all the inconveniences of long and arduous journeys which Shahjahan had to undertake during the period of his rebellion.[3] Shahjahan was equally devoted to her. Unfortunately she died in 1631 A.D. only three years after he ascended the throne. He was so much grieved and shocked at her premature demise that it is said that his hair turned grey in a single night.[4] As the time passed, slowly his whole affection turned towards Jahanara, his eldest and most favourite daughter. Once when she was burnt seriously in 1644 A.D., Shahjahan was very much worried and made best arrangements for her treatment. After she had recovered, Shahjahan organised great festivities and distributed alms to the poor.[5]

The only lady who seems to have enjoyed respect as well as affection of Aurangzeb was Jahanara Begam, whom he regarded with high esteem, irrespective of the fact that she had been a favourite of Dara Shukoh. He was very sincere to her and was always ready to obey her commands.[6] So long as Shahjahan was alive, Jahanara stayed with him and looked after him. After his death in 1666 A.D., she moved to Delhi where she was lodged comfortably in Ali Mardan Khan's mansion. In 1669 A.D. Aurangzeb ordered Danish Mand Khan, a highly cultured and eminent noble of the Empire, to attend upon her.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 213-14.

[2] He writes in his memoirs, "I only imparted this to Nurjahan Begam that whom I did not think anyone was fonder of me." See *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 266.

[3] Lahori, Vol. I, pp. 387, 390; K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 459.

[4] Lahori, Vol. I, pp. 386-88; K. Khan, Vol. I, pp. 459-60, Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 27-28.

[5] Lahori, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 363-69.

[6] *Adab*, ff. 196a, 196b; *Ruqqat*, f. 194a.

Not only the Emperors, even the nobles and other officers of the court paid great respect to the ladies. They used to dismount from their horses at a distance and bow before the ladies. The nobles could not see the princesses personally. Their messages were sent through the eunuchs who were employed for the purpose. When permitted, the nobles would move a few steps forward at a gentle pace. As a token of special favour, the ladies sent betal leaves by the hands of a eunuch. The nobles received the gift with a bow, thus expressing their regard and high esteem for the ladies.[2]

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[1] Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 56.

The only other lady for whom Aurangzeb is said to have a soft corner was Hira Bai (Surnamed Zainabadi Begam) whom he seems to have been once infatuated by. Contemporary records are silent about this affair. However, even if there was any such thing, it must have been a passing phase without leaving any effect either on the personal life of the Emperor or on the contemporary politics. Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 37, Sarkar, Vol. I, pp. 65-66.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 354.

5

MUGHAL HAREM AND THE LADIES OF THE NOBILITY

IN THE Mughal period the ladies apartment of the Emperor was called *Mahal.* Abul Fazl named it as *Shabistan-i-Iqbal* or *Shabistan-i-khas.* As it was not easily accessible, it is difficult to find a very reliable and authentic account of the harem.

A big portion of the palace was occupied by the ladies of the royal household. In Akbar's time more than five thousand women lived in his harem. They all had separate apartments.[1] The number of the ladies increased by the time of Aurangzeb.[2] None-the-less, the apartments of these ladies were splendid. The palaces of the ladies such as Ruqayya Sultan Begam, Shahzadi Khanam, Gulizar Begam and Miriam Makani were situated at Agra.[3] There were three more palaces in which the concubines of the Emperor were accommodated. They were known as Leathevar (Sunday), Mongol (Tuesday) and Zenisher (Saturday) Mahals.[4] On these days the Emperors used to visit the said palaces. Besides this, there was also a palace for women in which lived foreign concumbines of the kings. This was named as Bengali Mahal.[5] Emperor Akbar had erected

[1] *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 44.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 330. He also supplies a list of the names of songsters, dancers, matrons etc.

[3] De Laet gives a list of the palaces belonging to the ladies at Agra such as Ruqayya Sultan Begam, Gulizar Begam, Shahzadi Khanam, Miriam Makani (it should be Maryam-uz-Zamani, pp.37-39).

[4] De Laet, pp. 37-39; Pelsaert, pp. 3-4.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

many women's apartments at every sixteenth mile from Agra which could accommodate sixteen ladies with servants.[1]

An interesting description of three mahals in the fort of Lahore constructed during the reign of Jahangir is given by some foreign travellers. The first was a double storied building, each storey containing eight fair lodgings for several women. The second was a square edifice with accommodation for two hundred women. The third was the most splendid containing sixteen 'great lodgings, a paved courtyard and a pond,' thus providing a 'little world of pleasure.' It was decorated with mirrors and painted pictures. The door of the room could only be fastened from outside and none from within.[2] The quarters of Miriam Makani and other ladies were situated to the south-west and south of *Diwan-i-khas* at Fatehpur Sikri.[3]

The private rooms made for the queens were very rich 'where they sit and see all but are not seen'.[4] There is a vivid description of the apartments of Jahanara, the favourite daughter of Shahjahan. Her room was situated between *Shahburj* and the bedroom of the Emperor. It was decorated with many paintings on walls which were of exquisite beauty and refinement.[5] Begam Saheb's palace in Lahore was built of white marble and contained canals, fountains and gardens. Apartments for other women also were there. The whole building cost about seven lakhs of rupees.[6]

Thus it appears that the ladies lived in splendour, pomp and luxury. Their seraglio contained splendid and beautiful apartments in keeping with their rank and income. Every chamber had its reservoirs, gardens, alleys and shady retreats.[7]

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 44.

[2] Finch, pp. 162-65; Purchas, Vol. IV, p. 54-55.

[3] Finch, p. 149.

[4] Hawkins, *Early Travels*, p. 118.

[5] Lahore, Vol. I, part II, p. 241; also description of a palace, Vol. II, Part I, p. 313.

[6] Waris, Vol. I, ff. 53-54.

[7] Bernier (p. 267) says, "They inform me that the seraglio contains beautiful apartments, separated and more or less spacious and splendid according to rank and income of females. Nearly every chamber has its reservoir of running water at the door, on every side are gardens, delightful alleys, shady retreats, streams, fountains, grottoes, deep excavations that afford shelter from the Sun by day, lofty divans and terraces, on which to sleep coolly at night."

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Organisation of the Harem

Unlike the Sultanate period, the harem in the Mughal period was elaborately organised by the Emperors. Chaste women were appointed as Daroghahs and Superintendents of the harem and they were assigned different sections to look after. Similarly matrons were appointed to maintain order and discipline in the harem. A lady was appointed writer who used to keep all the details of the harem.[1] These ladies were given liberal salaries. For their salaries, they had to apply to the *Tahwildars* or the cash-keepers.[2]

The highest female servant who controlled the harem was *Mahaldar*. She was just like a female major domo. She acted as a spy in the interest of the Emperor.[3] The interference of *Mahaldar* often resulted in a quarrel between her and the princes of royal family because they did not relish the watchful eyes of these *Mahaldars*.[4]

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[1] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 330-31.

[2] *Ain*, Vol. I, pp. 44-45; Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 330-31. According to *Ain*, women of highest rank received salary of rupees sixteen hundred and ten to rupees sixteen hundred and twenty-eight per month. Others received rupees fifty to rupees twenty per month. *Ain*, Vol. I, pp. 44-45.

[3] Hamida Banu was the *Mahaldar* of the harem of Muhammad Muazzam (Bahadur Shah). She informed the Emperor from the province of Multan that the prince takes the pen-case and memorandum-book in his private chamber. "Very often at night in the prince's private chamber where his beloved ones come, he takes with himself his pen-case and memorandum-book. Out of regard for etiquette, it is not allowed by the court regulations that the *Mahaldar* or her deputy should be present at that time. When Your Majesty gave this old slave woman (the writer) her congee you told her orally and you also inserted it in a (subsequent) royal letter, that whenever the prince would call for her pen-case, this old bond maid or her deputy Sharfunnissa should be present. These are the facts. What order in this matter?" And the Emperor ordered her not to leave the pen-case near the prince. *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, p. 65.

[4] Bahroz Khan, the Nazir of prince Muhammad Azam, reported to the Emperor "The prince has behaved badly towards Nurunnissa, the *Mahaldar*, so that he did not take her with himself (in his visits) to the Imperial garden at Ahmedabad. The *Mahaldar* sent a letter outside (the harem to me) forbidding the prince's journey. So, this slave (i.e. the writer) came and stopped the riding out of the prince, in the

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The harem was guarded with great caution and attention. Sober and active women were appointed inside the harem to guard it.[1] *Habshi* and *Tatar* women were usually kept in these posts. The most trustworthy women-guards were placed near the apartment of the Emperor. On the outer fringe eunuchs were placed, and at a proper distance from them were deputed bands of faithful Rajput guards. On the gates, porters were posted. Besides this, on all the four sides, there were guards of nobles *Ahadis* and other troops according to their rank.[2] No one could easily enter the harem. The doors of the harem were closed at sunset and torches were left burning. Each lady guard was obliged to send the reports to the Nazir[3] of all that happened in the harem.[4] Whenever the wives of some nobles or Begams desired to visit the harem, they had to notify first to the servants of the seraglio. Then they sent their request to the officers of the palace after which, those, who were eligible, were permitted to enter the harem. Some women of rank were even permitted to stay there for a whole month.[5]

Another interesting thing connected with the organisation of the harem was that the king appointed similar officers from among the fair sex within the Mahal, as he did outside.[6] Some women occupied offices which were equal to those of the court.[7] The written reports of all the events which occurred in the *Mahal* were sent to the Emperor. The replies or orders were written by the women writers of the harem as directed by

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absence of any order (from the Emperor). The prince expelled the *Mahaldar* from his assembly." The Emperor ordered him to prevent the prince's riding out and also punished him. *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 71-72.

[1] Manucci informs that Kashmiri women were appointed at the door of the harem to guard it. (Vol. II, p. 352).

[2] *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 45; Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 350-51; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 201.

[3] Nazir was a term used for the eunuchs who guarded the harem. Each princess had a nazir in whom she reposed great confidence. Manucci, Vol. II, p. 350.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

[5] *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 45; Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 350-51.

[6] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 330-31.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 331.

Emperor or the Prince.[1] The news letters (of *waqianavis*) were commonly read in the king's presence by the women of the *Mahal* at about 9 o'clock in the evening.[2] At night the Emperor was guarded by women skilled in the art of archery and other arms.[3] The processions of the Emperors were often accompanied with *Kaneezes* (women servants).[4]

Ladies of Nobility

The wives of the nobles followed the footsteps of the royalty. Normally, a noble married more than three or four wives.[5] The senior-most wife commanded the greatest respect. These wives worshipped their husbands like God.[6] The reason was that the whole management of the palace was in their hands and they could give and refuse anything. The noble visited a particular wife on a particular day, and on such occasions he was welcomed very cordially. The slaves arranged for all kinds of comforts for him. While going out, the nobles were accompanied by the favourite wife only. The rest of them were left behind and they enjoyed the company of the eunuchs. They were always anxious to go out. These women wore the most expensive clothes, ate daintiest food and enjoyed all wordly pleasures except the company of their husbands.[7] They were often very jealous of each other of gaining favours of their husband, but they never expressed this feeling so as not to annoy the master.

Eunuchs and purchased Bengali slaves were appointed to guard each wife 'to ensure that she is seen by no other man except her husband.[8] If a eunuch failed in his duty, he was given severe punishment.[9]

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 331-32; *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-Wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 252. Bibi Fatima's daughter was a women soldier or *Urdbegi* in the harem of Humayun.

[4] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 130b.

[5] Pelsaert, p. 64; De Laet, pp. 90-91.

[6] Pelsaert, pp. 64-65.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Pelsaert says that the wives of only some noblemen were chaste and

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The ladies of the nobility led a luxurious life. Their residences were the very picture of magnificence. The wife of Jafar Khan was one of the most magnificent and liberal ladies.[1] After the completion of one of her palaces, she gave a grand banquet and also invited the Emperor.[2] The wife of Khalilullah Khan, the granddaughter of Asaf Khan, also lived in great pomp and splendour.[3]

Each wife of a noble lived in a separate apartment and received a monthly allowance for domestic expenses (furniture, clothes, jewels etc.) from her husband.[4] These ladies possessed many gold and silver vessels. They had many slaves and maids to serve them.[5] Their grandeur varied according to their influence upon their husbands.

The residences of these ladies were surrounded by massive walls, with tanks and gardens inside it which they used for their recreation.[6] In the words of Pelsaert, "The Mahals are adorned with lascivious sensuality, wanton and reckless festivity, superfluous pomp, inflated pride and ornamented daintiness."[7]

Concubines

The practice of keeping concubines was very common both among the royalty and the nobility.[8] These concubines did

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most of them enjoyed themselves during the absence of their husbands. (Pelsaert, p. 68.). But this view seems to be based on hearsay. They lived in strict seclusion.

[1] Tavernier says, "The wife of Jafar Khan is the most magnificent and liberal woman in whole India and she alone expends more than all the wives and daughters of the king put together. Her family is always in debt. . . . " Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 389.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Manucci informs that the wife of Khalilullah Khan, the granddaughter of Asaf Khan, wore shoes worth three million rupees owing to the precious stones garnished in them. (Manucci, Vol. I, pp. 193-94).

[4] De Laet, pp. 90-91; Pelsaert, pp. 64-65.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Pelsaert, pp. 64-65.

[8] Ovington, p. 234.

their best to attract their masters.[1] They used perfumes[2] and sweet-scented ointments to excite their lust and encouraged them to use opiums and intoxicating drugs. They served them by driving flies, rubbing their hands and feet and playing on musical instruments.[3] They sometimes took the place of their real wives who felt jealous of them.

Each concubine had her own apartment.[4] They were protected by strong guards. None except the eunuchs or maid servants could enter the inner halls of their palaces.[5] If any of these guards failed in his duty, he was severely punished. These women also longed for the company of their husbands, as they visited them seldom, according to convenience.[6] As stated earlier, the wives of nobles, and the concubines were jealous of each other for gaining the favour and company of their husbands.[7]

Female Soothsayers

There were female soothsayers in the harem who forecast the future. During Jahangir's reign when a pearl of the value of fourteen or fifteen thousand rupees was lost, a female soothsayer augured that it would be soon found and that a woman with white skin would bring it. This came to be true and she was rewarded.[8] A woman palmist told Jahangir that a beautiful woman wearing white clothes would come to bless him. On the third day a concubine (Turk) came to him laughing and said that the prince, who had been sent to Dholpur, would be successful.[1] Thus it seems true that female soothsayers existed in those days and predicted the future. The fact seems to be that male soothsayers could not go into female apartments and thus female soothsayers came into being.

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[1] Careri, p. 247.

[2] *Ibid.*; also Pelsaert, p. 65. Slave girls studied how to make exciting perfumes.

[3] Pelsaert, p. 65.

[4] De Laet, p. 99.

[5] *Ibid.*; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 201.

[6] Pelsaert says, "So lascivious are the women and yet they are excusable because the husbands, though they be peasants only, call them when have occasions." Pelsaert, p. 65.

[7] Regarding this, Tavernier observes, "As the custom the first born succeeds the throne the ladies of King's harem became very jealous of each other." They used all methods to bring about a miscarriage to the other wives. Tavernier further gives information about it when he was at Patna in 1666 A.D. saying, that Shaista Khan's surgeon assured him that the prince's wife of Shaista Khan in one month had caused miscarriage to eight women of his harem not permitting any children but her own. (Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 393).

[8] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 235.

Spies

Women also served as spies in the Mughal court. Reference of a lady named Aga-i-Sarvkad is found in the time of Humayun and Akbar. She was formerly in the harem of Babur. She came to act as a spy and to gather information about Khan Khanan and other big nobles.[2]

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[1] *Iqbal Nama*, p. 193.

[2] *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-Wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 290.

6

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE LADIES OF ROYALTY-I

THE LADIES of the Mughal harem occupied themselves with various activities, amusements and entertainments. On account of the strict *parda*, they spent their leisure mostly in gardens and on marble terraces. In contemporary paintings they are represented sitting or talking in calm enchanting surroundings, sometimes their maids fanning or massaging them.[1] They lived in palaces with spacious courtyards, dotted over with flower-beds and running fountains.[2] From their windows they could have a view of the outside world also. Some of them were intensely devoted to religion and literary activities, others devoted their time in music, dancing and fine arts. Many of them went on excursions and pleasure trips but most of them were interested in dresses, toilet and ornaments.

Recreation

Sometimes pipes and drinking cups added to their enjoyment and they often had a puff or a sip to make themselves more lively In the latter half of the seventeenth century smoking *(Hukka* or *hubble-bubble)* became very popular.[3] It was also used to entertain guests. Drinking was also very common.[4]

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[1] *Kaumudi*, p. 43.

[2] *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by Stuart, p. 220.

[3] *Kaumudi*, p. 42.

[4] Paintings bear testimony to it; drinks and cups being kept in front of the ladies. See plates lvii b, lviii, lxiii,. in Stchoukine; *Art of Bikaner*, pp. 174-75.

"The ladies", says Manucci, "drank at night when music, dancing and acting and other delightful pranks go on around."[1] Reference is also made in contemporary Hindi literature to liquor being used by women.[2]

To beguile time, ladies played games like *Chess*, *Chauper*, *Chandal-Mandal* and *Pachisi*.[3] Zebunnisa Begam was particularly

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[1] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 219. According to him Jahanara Begam was particularly interested in drinking. He writes, "The princess was fond of drinking wine which was imported for her from Persia, Kabul, Kashmir. But the best liquor she drank was distilled in her own house. It was a most delicious drink made from wine and rose water, flavoured with many costly spices, aromatic drugs." Vol. I, p. 219. This statement of Manucci creates doubt whether a lady of pious inclination like that of Jahanara could be fond of drinking.

It is also found that she presented some bottles of wine to Manucci for curing the inmates of the harem. (Manucci, Vol. I, p. 219).

[2] *Bihari Satsai*, Dohas 358, 359, 360, 361, pp. 127-28.

[3] There are various paintings which depict women busy at these games. See *Kaumudi*, pp. 26-27; *Mughal Painting* by Coomaraswamy, Plate vii, page 5, shows two women playing *Pachisi*, the girl in green holds the dice and in red is making her move. They are sitting on the marble terrace resting on cushions.

Chess—It was a game played on a board, which was divided into 64 squares, eight on each of the four sides. Each player had, at his disposal, a little army of 16 men, from the king down to a foot-soldier. The game could be played both two-handed and four-handed.

Chauper—It was a game in which two parallel lines of equal length were drawn with two others bisecting them at right angles, forming a little square at the centre and four rectangles each divided into four equal spaces of three rows on its (four) adjoining sides. The game could be played by four or two players. Each player had, at his command, four pieces of the same shape but different in colour from his companions. Three dices were used with dots marked from one to six. To begin with each player was required to place two of his pieces in the 6th and 7th places of the same middle row while the 7th and 8th spaces of the right row were occupied by the other two pieces. The left row was left empty. Each moved his pieces according to his throw till he arrived at the row to the left of the place of his start. He would then move to the empty space in the middle when he threw the exact number required to carry each of his pieces to the empty square. He was now *rasida* or arrived. If any of the four players had brought his four pieces into the empty square, even then he continued to throw for his companion in his turn to get him out too.

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fond of playing *Chauper*.[1] Pigeon-flying and kite-flying were also some of their favourite pastimes.[2] It appears that sometimes the ladies played polo too, though due to the strict seclusion observed by the ladies of royalty it is difficult to believe.[3]

Another exciting amusement of the ladies was the display of fire-works. Manucci writes, "Their amusement at night is generally to have large torches lighted on which they will spend more than one hundred and fifty thousand rupees."[4] In some paintings also royal ladies are seen letting off the fire-works which proves its popularity.[5]

Interest in Religion

Some of the ladies devoted themselves to religious pursuits. They spent their time in the service of God, in prayers (*namaz*) and in reading holy book (Quran). Jahanara Begam spent much of her time in religious pursuits and devotion to God.[6] She writes in her *Risala-i-Sahibiya* that God has concentrated in her the ardent desire of the search of right path.[7] Her brother, Dara Shukoh, induced her to become a devotee of *Qadiriya* order though the princess was devoted to *Chishtia* order.[8] She made Mulla Shah her guide and spiritual preceptor.[9]

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Chandal-Mandal—It was a modified *chauper* so designed as to increase the number of players to 16 with 64 pieces divided equally among them. The pieces were moved as in *Chauper*. It consisted of 16 parallelograms each divided into 24 equal fields each having three rows and 3 spaces. These parallelograms were arranged in a circular form around a centre. Betting was allowed.

Pachisi—It was an old game played on boards.

[1] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 82.

[2] *Kaumudi*, pp. 26-27.

[3] *The Court Painters of Grand Mughals* by Binyon, plate vii, p. 18. Picture shows a princess playing polo.

[4] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 341.

[5] *Kaumudi*, p. 55.

[6] *Jahanara* by Yazdani, Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Vol. II, 1912, p. 163.

[7] *Risala-i-Sahibiya of Jahanara Begam*, Aligarh University Manuscript.

[8] *Dara Shukoh—Life and Works* by B. Hasrat, pp. 82-83.

[9] *Ibid.*

She wrote, "Of all the descendants of Taimur, only we two brother and sister were fortunate to obtain this felicity. None of our forefathers ever tread this path in quest of God and in search of truth. . . ."[1]

Emperor Aurangzeb was particularly interested in religion and 'the females of his harem (daughters)', under his direction, "learned the necessary doctrines of religion and all engaged in the worship of God, reading and transcribing Quran and the acquisition of virtues and provision for the next world."[2] Zinatunnisa, the second daughter of Aurangzeb, was brought up by him 'in knowledge of doctrines and the necessary rules of the faith.'[3] Zebunnisa and Badrunnisa, his other daughters, also memorised Quran and the latter 'read books on faith.'[4]

Education and Learning

A fairly important activity of the ladies of royalty was their active interest in literary pursuits. They occupied themselves with reading, writing and composing verses. Due attention was paid towards their education. Often the girls of the palace gathered to receive education of the primary standard.[5] Sometimes the duties of school mistress and governess were combined in one person and she was entitled *Atun Mama.*[6] Such a *Atun Mama* is mentioned as a guest in Gulbadan Begam's list of the guests in the mystic feast.[7] During the reign of Akbar definite arrangements were made for imparting regular education to the ladies of Imperial harem. Monserrate, who visited India in 1580 A. D., says about Akbar's interest in female education, "He gives very great care and attention to the education of the princesses. . . . They are taught to read and write and are trained in other ways by matrons."[1] Akbar established a girls' school in Fatehpur Sikri.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[2] *M.A.*, p. 318.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

[4] Zubdatunnisa, another daughter of Aurangzeb, employed herself in adoring the creator and thus gaining boundless reward. *M.A.*, p. 323.

[5] *Some of the Women Relations of Babur* by S.K. Banerji (Indian Culture, Vol. IV, 1937-38), p. 53.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 53; Manucci, Vol. II, p. 331. *Babur Nama* also refers to a *Atun Mama* who was probably Qutluq Nigar Khanam.

[7] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 121.

The Mughal Emperors also used to employ educated ladies, usually Persian, to teach their daughters.[3] Shahjahan and Aurangzeb had such lady tutors for their daughters. The curriculum included study of Persian, Arabic, Theology, History[4] etc. Some of the ladies learnt Quran by heart, others took interest in reading books like *Gulistan* and *Bostan* written by Sheikh Sadi Shirazi.[5] The ladies of the house of nobles also received education through private lady tutors engaged for them.[6]

In the Mughal harem, the first lady who engaged herself actively in literary pursuits was Gulbadan Begam, the daughter of Babur. She was well-versed in Persian and Turki. Gifted with a poetic temperament she often composed verses.[7] She wrote *Humayun Nama*, on the request of Akbar, giving an account of social and political activities of the time. It is a valuable store-house of historical information. Her interests in literary activities were intense and wide. She was a lover of books. It appears that she used to collect books and thus had a library of her own.[8]

The second daughter of Babur, Gulrukh Begam, also had a taste for poetry and wrote a number of verses.[9]

Another lady, outstanding in the field of literary pursuits, was Salima Sultan Begam, a niece of Emperor Humayun. After the death of her husband Bairam Khan she was married to Akbar. She was well-versed in Persian and made rich contribution in literary sphere by composing verses under the nom-de-plume of *Makhfi* (concealed).[1] She also maintained a library of her own.[2]

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[1] Monserrate, p. 203.
[2] Law, p. 203; Jafar, p. 190.
[3] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 301.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 331.
[6] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 301.
[7] Bazm, p. 436.
[8] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), (Introduction), p. 76; Law, pp. 201-2.
[9] Bazm, p. 439.

Jan Begam, the daughter of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, was also an accomplished lady. It is said that she wrote a commentary on the Quran and she was rewarded 50,000 *Dinars* for her work by Akbar [3] She was renowned for her generosity and patronage of learned men.[4]

Another remarkable figure in the field of learning was Nurjahan Begum. She was a talented and cultured lady and was well-versed in Persian and Arabic. She was especially fond of Persian poetry and herself composed verses.[5] She maintained a library, rich with books.[6] Among the courtiers of Nurjahan there were some ladies who were able poetesses.[7]

Mumtaz Mahal, the beloved wife of Shahjahan, also possessed literary taste. She was adept in Persian and could compose verses.[8] She was a patron of men of letters. Vansidhara Misra, a renowned Sanskrit poet, was a favourite of Queen Mumtaz.[9]

The female *Nazir* to Mumtaz Mahal named Satiunnisa was a learned lady. She had a good knowledge of Persian and was well-versed in Islamic theology. On account of her literary accomplishments she was appointed as tutoress of Jahanara Begam.[1] Satiunnisa was also a good poetess.[2]

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[1] Blochman in his translation of *Ain* refers to it in Vol. I, p. 309; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 68; K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 276; Bazm, p. 440; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 371, quotes the following verse—

In my passion I called thy lock the thread of life.
I was wild and so uttered such an expression.

Law, p. 202; Jafar, p 193; *A Few Aspects of Education and Literature Under the Great Mughals* by Beni Prasad (I.H.R.C., Vol. V, 1923), p. 48.

[2] Bazm, p. 440.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 442; Shustry, p. 589; *Society and Culture in Mughal Age* by P.N. Chopra, p. 124.

[4] Bazm, p. 442.

[5] *Chahar Gulshan* by Chittraman Kayath, f. 16a. She composed extempore verses. Law, p. 202; Jafar, p. 194; *A Few Aspects of Education and Literature Under the Great Mughals* by Beni Prasad (I.H.R.C., Vol. V, 1923), p. 48.

[6] Bazm, p. 443. She purchased Diwan-i-Kamran for three *Mohars*. *Some Aspects of Northern Indian Social Life* by P.N. Ojha, p. 132.

[7] Bazm, p. 443. One of them was Mehr Harwi (or Hardi).

[8] Law, p. 202; Jafar, p. 195; Bazm, p. 447; *A Few Aspects of Education and Literature Under the Great Mughals* by Beni Prasad (I.H.R.C., Vol. V, 1923), p. 48.

[9] *Muslim Patronage to Sanskrit Learning* by J.B. Chaudhury, Vol. I, p. 77.

Jahanara Begam, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan, was a highly educated lady. Nazir, the brother of Hakim Rukna Kashi, taught her Quran and Persian.[3] Like her brother Dara, she had in her a strain of mysticism and wrote many *Risalas* (pamphlets) on this subject.[4] She also composed verses in Persian and wrote her own epitaph which is humble and simple.[5] In 1671 A.D. she wrote 'Munis-ul-Arwah', a biography of Muslim saint Muinuddin Chishti and his descendants.[6] She encouraged men of letters by giving them allowances and rewards.[7] Mir Muhammad Ali Mahir, entitled Murid Khan, wrote a *Masnavi* (a long poem) in praise of Jahanara Begam in which he extolled her generosity and patronage of literature.[8]

One of the most remarkable literary figures of late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was Zebunnisa Begam, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb. Her father placed her under the charge of Hafiza Maryam, a highly educated lady, and Mulla Said Ashraf Mazanddrani, who was a great Persian poet. Their contact enabled her to develop a taste and inspiration for composing verses.[9] Shah Rustam Ghazi, a renowned scholar, also encouraged her in her literary pursuits. She committed to memory the entire Quran for which she was rewarded thirty thousand gold pieces by her father.[10] She attained proficiency in Mathematics and Astronomy[11] and was well-versed in Persian and Arabic. She was also skilled in the art of calligraphy and could write *Shikast*, *nastaliq* and *naskh* perfectly.[1] Her letters veiled in sweet literary style have been appreciated by her father, Aurangzeb.[2] She spent much of her time in literary pursuits and in her court flocked the renowned scholars and poets of that time. Mirza Khalil, a known scholar of that period, was employed in her service. Among the poets of her circle were Nazir Ali Saib, Samsh Waliullah, Chanderbhan Brahmin, and Bahraaz.[3] She also built up a good library. She established a translation department where a number of classical books were translated. At her instance the commentary on Holy Quran by Imam Fakhrudddin Razi was translated from Arabic to Persian by Mulla Shaikhuddin Ardbeli. It was renamed 'Zibul-Tafsir' after her name.[4] There are some works which are ascribed to Zebunnisa herself. 'Zibul-Munshaat' is a collection of her letters.[5] Another work attributed to her is 'Diwan-i-Makhfi.'[6] Her literary activities were so intense and wide that she earned a name for herself in the literary world.[7]

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[1] *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, pp. 151, 173; Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 22.

[2] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 22.

[3] Lahori, Vol. II, Part II, p. 629.

[4] *Mirat-ul-Istila* by Anand Ram Mukhalis, f. 122a.

[5] Law, pp. 203-4; Jafar, pp. 195-96; Bazm, p. 448.

"Let not any person cover my tomb with anything other than earth and grass, for they are best fittted for the grave of the poor."

[6] Bazm, p. 448.

[7] Law, p. 203; Jafar, p. 196.

[8] *The Court Life of the Mughals* by Dr. M.A. Ansari (Thesis) p. 119; *Tuhfat-al-Shura*, p. 123.

[9] *Zebunnisa Begam and Diwan-i-Makhfi* by H.S. Ahmad (J.B.O.R.S., Vol. XIII, 1927), p. 42.

[10] *M.A.*, p. 322; Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 79.

[11] *Diwan of Jebunnisa* by Magan Lal, p. 8.

Some ladies of royalty were also interested in promoting the cause of education. They founded colleges and gave stipends for encouraging education. Bega Begam, the wife of Humayun, founded a college near the tomb of her husband.[8] Another lady interested in the field was Maham Anaga, the nurse of Akbar. She considered it a great service to impart education and spent a lot of money for this purpose. She established a *Madarsa* at Delhi which was attached to a mosque called Khair-ul-manzil.[1] Another lady of the Mughal harem who was actively interested in education was Jahanara Begam, the daughter of Shahjahan. She founded a *Madarsa* attached to the Jama Masjid at Agra.[2]

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[1] *M.A.*, p. 322; Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 79; Law, p. 204; Jafar, p. 197; Bazm, p. 456.

[2] *Court Life of Great Mughals* by Dr. M.A. Ansari (Thesis), p. 119; Mir Mah, f. 1176.

[3] *Diwan of Zebunnisa* by Magan Lal, p. 9.

[4] *M.A.*, p. 322; *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* by Yusuf Husain, p. 193; *Educational System in Medieval India* by Yusuf Husain (Islamic Culture, Vol. XXX, 1956), p. 121; Jafar, p. 197; Bazm, p. 456.

[5] *Zebunnisa Begam and Diwan-i-Makhfi* by H.S. Ahmad (J.B.O.R.S., Vol. XIII, 1927), p. 42.

[6] It is said that the author of *Diwan-i-Makhfi* was a *Khurasani* poet who migrated to India during the reign of Shahjahan. *Zebunnisa Begam and Diwan-i-Makhfi* by H.S. Ahmad (J.B.O.R.S., Vol. XIII, 1927), p. 53; Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 80.

[7] Her fame in the sphere of learning is evident from the numerous portraits which represent her pouring over a book, sitting or writing something, probably composing a poem. (*Kaumudi*, p. 56).

[8] *Humayun Badshah* by Banerji, Vol. II, p. 317.

The patronage given by the ladies to the spread of education was not confined to the capital alone. In some provinces of the Empire also some ladies seem to have taken active interest in this field. Bibi Razi, the wife of Mahmud Shah of Jaunpur, built a college and allotted stipends for students and professors.[3]

Artistic Activities

The ladies of the royal family were interested in various types of fine arts. They often spent their leisure in painting, decoration, dancing, music etc. which attracted them most

PAINTING

The art of painting was one of the favourite pastimes of the ladies of the Mughal harem. It is difficult to say whether they achieved any distinction in this art, as no reference of a lady painter is available, but there are evidences to prove that they did indulge in it.[4] Nurjahan, the royal consort of Jahangir, shared actively her husband's interest in painting. She appears to be adept in this art,[5] but no painting from her brush is available. In the absence of positive information, it is not possible to find out the general motives and the techniques followed by the ladies.

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 313; Law, p. 202; Jafar, p. 194; *Educational System in Medieval India* by Yusuf Husain, Islamic Culture, Vol. 30, 1956, p. 116; *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* by Yusuf Husain, p. 84.

[2] *Educational System in Medieval India* by Yusuf Husain (Islamic Culture, Vol. 30, 1956), p. 117.

[3] Law, p. 101; Jafar, p. 128.

[4] *Kaumudi*, p. 58. A Woman Artist of Mughal Time picture at Bharat Kala Bhawan, Benares.

[5] 'Princess examinent unportrait'. Hasan Ghulam is shcwing a portrait to Mihrunnisa in *darbar* which she is examining. Stchoukine, plate vii.

DECORATION

The ladies were also interested in the art of decoration. According to Gulbadan Begam, street decoration on a large scale was initiated by Mahim Begam, the wife of Babur.[1]

As the activities of the ladies were mostly confined to their palaces and gardens, they tried to decorate them as beautifully as they possibly could.[2]

Nurjahan Begam was greatly interested in the art of decoration. She designed new varieties of carpets, brocades and dresses etc.[3] She also introduced new ways of decorating apartments and arranging feasts.[4] Her embroidery and lace-work added to the charms of her decorations.

COOKING

Cooking was usually the concern of the professional cooks employed in the harem. It was only on rare occasions that some lady took some special interest in cooking.

Jahanara Begam sometimes used to prepare some dishes. She writes in her *Risala-i-Sahibiya* that she herself prepared vegetable, bread and different varieties of food and sent it to the saint Hazrat Miyan Meer.[5] Another instance is found of Aurangzeb's wife, Udaipuri Mahal. Manucci informs that once she prepared a *rogout* (stew) and invited Aurangzeb to her apartment.[6]

DANCE

The art of dancing does not seem to enjoy a respectable place in society and, as such, there are no references available

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[1] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 114.

[2] On the occasion of the circumcision feast of Akbar, when the decorations were made in Bega Begam's garden, "Begam and ladies made theirs (garden) quite wonderful in a new fashion." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 179-80.

Bayazid also writes that the Begams decorated the garden in *Artah* when Akbar came to Kabul near Humayun. *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-Wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, pp. 59-60.

[3] *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 510; K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 269.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Risala-i-Sahibiya* of Jahanara Begam, Aligarh University Manuscript.

[6] Manucci. Vol. III, pp. 258-59.

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of ladies of high class family taking interest in this art. Thus it seems to have been confined to a class of professionals alone.

Dances were generally performed in restricted assemblies. Still they were quite popular and added to delight on occasions of marriages, birthdays and other such ceremonious occasions. Royal ladies of the harem often entertained themselves with dance performances.[1] Although Aurangzeb prohibited dancing and singing at court, yet he allowed it in his palace for the diversion of the queens and his daughters.[2]

There was a certain class of ladies which took dancing as profession. Akbar used to call them *Kanchinies*.[3] They had no other profession except dancing.[4] They performed their dances on ceremonious occasions. Peter Mundy, who visited India in 1628 A.D. writes, "There are also dancing wenches of whom there are diverse sorts as Lullenees (Lalni), Harcanees (Harakin), Kanchanees (Kanchain) and Doomenees (Domm) being of several castes and use different manners of musick. Most commonly they are hired at solemne feasts where they playe, singe and daunce. And there is scarce any meeting of friends without them. . . ."[5] Bernier refers to them as dancing girls.[6]

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[1] Many paintings bear testimony to the ladies' fondness of dancing and singing. A picture of Nurjahan holding a *Nauroz Mahfil* shows one woman dancing and others playing on musical instruments. (Picture in possession of Lala Sri Ram of Delhi, Journal of Indian History, Vol. I, p. 586).

Another picture of Jahangir sitting on throne surrounded by courtiers shows many dancing women (Entertainment at Jahangir's Court painted by Kishen Chand), *Kaumudi*, p. 54, Stchoukine, plate lvii, *Indian Painting Under the Mughals* by P. Brown, Plate lvii, Fig. I. Painting shows two ladies dancing. They are performing movement called *Chacha* or sea-saw, in the course of which they hold hands and circle eight times. It is said to have been originally a Hindu dance but later on was taken over by the Mughals.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 335.

[3] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 272.

[4] Thevenot, p. 71.

[5] Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 216.

[6] Bernier, p. 273; Ovington, p. 257; *Indian Paintings Under the Mughals* by P. Brown, plate xxxi. Painting shows the women musicians called *Bandis* proclaiming the magnificence of the Emperor in songs accompanied with instruments at the coronation ceremony.

Women also took part in the *Akhara* which was an "entertainment held at night by the nobles of this country some of whose (female) domestic servants are taught to sing and play. . . . Four pretty women lead off a dance and some graceful movements are executed. Four others are employed to sing while four more accompany them with *Cymbal:** two others play the *Pakhawaj,** two the *Upang,** while the Deccan *Rabab,** the *Vina** and the *Yantra** are each taken by one player. Besides the usual lighting arrangements and lamps of entertainments, two women holding lamps stand near the circle of performers. Some employ more. . . ."[1]

MUSIC

Some ladies of the royal family took keen interest in music and were themselves good singers. Ratnavali, the wife of Puran Mal, sang Hindi melodies sweetly.[2] Man Singh's queen Mrignayni was expert in music.[3] Meera Bai was a well-known singer.[4] It is said that Nurjahan and Zebunnisa Begam also sang well and the former even composed songs.[5] Just like dancing, music also enhanced the gaiety of different ceremonies like birthday, marriage, etc. In this way many ladies took interest in music.[6] Some of them made it their profession. *Dadi* women were employed to sing *Sohla* and *Dhrupad* on birthdays and marriage ceremonies. Abul Fazl refers to a particular class of female singers known as the *Sezdah Tali* class. He says,

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* These are all various types of musical instruments.

[1] *Ain,* Vol. III, p. 273.

[2] *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* by Abbas Khan (E. & D.), Vol. IV, p. 402.

[3] *Bhartiya Sangeet Ka Itihas* by Umesh Joshi, p. 204.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 246.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 334.

[6] Paintings of ladies holding various musical instruments bear it out. A picture of Nurjahan holding *Nauroz Mahfil* shows one lady playing on *Duff,* and another on *Bansuri.* Picture in possession of Lala Sri Ram of Delhi, Journal of Indian History, Vol. I, No. I, p. 586; *Indian Painting Under the Mughals* by P. Brown, plates xlvii, xxxi; Ladies holding Drums, Tambourine, *Duff* etc., plate xlvi shows chorus of women vocalists; Stchoukine, plates lvii, lviii, lxiii, lxiv, show ladies holding various instruments such as *Tanpura, Dholak, Veena* etc. *Boston, Catalogue of Indian Collections* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Plates iii, v, xxxvi, xlvii, *Art of Bikaner*, p. 174).

"The women while they sing play upon thirteen pairs of *talas* at once, two being on each wrists, two on the joints of each elbow, two on the junction of the shoulder blades and two on each shoulder, one on the breast and two on the finger of each hand. They are mostly from Gujrat and Malwa."[1] Besides *Dadi*, there were *Hurkiyah* women who played the *tala* and also sang.[2]

Entertainment of Guests (Feasts)

The monotony of life of the ladies in harem was often broken by the visits of guests and the reception offered to them. The wives of the nobles visited the ladies of the Emperor's household and *vice versa*.[3] They were entertained with sweet drinks *(sherbet)* and betel leaves which were the favourites of the aristocratic ladies.[4]

Some of the ladies took delight in arranging feasts and banquets. Various references are available in the contemporary records which indicate that some ladies really enjoyed arranging feasts. Mahim Begam, the mother of Humayun, gave a great feast at the accession of her son in 1530 A.D. She herself supervised the arrangements of the feast. She gave orders for general illuminations and instructed the upper class people and the soldiers to decorate their palaces and quarters attractively. Magnificent and splendid arrangements were made inside the palaces by her. She decorated the royal palace with golden embroidered pillows, cushions and hangings. In the pavilion of European brocade and Portugese cloth Mahim Begam herself prepared a tentling, a *Kanat* (enclosure) and a *Sar-i-Kanat* (a type of enclosure), with many jewelled and gold vessels, rose-water sprinkle, and candlesticks. "With all her stores of plenishing she made an excellent and splendid feast."[5]

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[1] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 272.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[3] Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 392. Contemporary paintings also unfold this aspect. *Kaumudi*, p. 43. Plate xiii shows a royal lady with two attendants entertaining her guests with sweet drinks, etc.

[4] Flasks of *sherbet*, rose-water and betel boxes are often seen in the foreground of various paintings. *Kaumudi*, p. 42.

[5] *G.H.N*, (Bev.), pp. 113-14.

In the year 1532-33 A.D. (938 H.), Khanzada Begam, the aunt of Emperor Humayun, suggested to him tocelebrate the marriage-feast of Hindal and also the mystic feast.[1] Khanzada Begam first organised the mystic feast,[2] after which Hindal's marriage-feast was celebrated. This feast was held in a magnificent fashion with gold and pearl hangings and vessels of gold and silver were used.[3]

In 1541 A.D. when Humayun was at Pat, Dildar Begam, another wife of Babur, organised a grand entertainment at which all the ladies of the court were present.[4] She also arranged the marriage of Humayun with Hamida Banu Begam in 1541 A.D. and gave a nuptial banquet after which she delivered the young lady to him.[5]

Maham Anaga, the nurse of Akbar, was also fond of arranging banquets. In 1561 A.D. she arranged a delightful banquet on the occasion of her son's marriage.[6] The same year she also arranged another great entertainment in which many ladies participated.[7]

The feasts on the occasion of lunar and solar weighing ceremonies were often held at the house of the mother of the Emperor.[8]

During the reign of Jahangir, his wife Nurjahan Begam gave many feasts. In 1617 A.D. she held a grand feast in one of her

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[1] The Emperor agreed with the suggestion of Khanzada Begam and said, "Let what my Royal aunt wishes be done." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 117-18.

[2] Gulbadan Begam gives a vivid description of the arrangements which took place in an octagonal room where Persian carpets were set and jewelled throne and golden embroidered Diwan were placed. *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 118-24.

[3] Gulbadan Begam writes, "(Khanzada Begam) made a most entertaining and splendid feast. . . . Such as has not been made for any other child of my Royal father. She planned it all and carried it all." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 126-27.

[4] *Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat* by Jauhar, Tr. p. 30.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[6] Abul Fazl writes, "Maham Begam took leave from the court to make arrangements. She prepared a delightful banquet." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 204-5.

[7] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 221; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 250-51.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 558; *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 145, 148; Vol. II, p. 54.

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houses which was situated in the midst of a large tank.[1] In the same year, to celebrate the victory of Khurram in Mewar, she gave another feast.[2] After the completion of her house and garden in 1620 A.D. which she built at Nur Sarai, she organised an entertainment and a grand feast,[3] and also presented many rarities to Jahangir.

In 1621 A.D. Jahangir, along with other ladies, went to the Nur Afshan Garden which belonged to Nurjahan Begam. In his honour she held a royal entertainment there.[4]

In 1621 A. D., when Jahangir recovered from his illness and the feast on the occasion of lunar weighing ceremony took place, Nurjahan Begam ordered her Vakils to make arrangements for some entertainment.[5] She herself paid greater attention to the arrangements at this occasion than she did on previous ones. At the end of the feast she presented offerings. This entertainment cost about two lakhs of rupees excluding the offerings.

After Nurjahan Begam, the interest of royal ladies in arranging feasts and entertainments started decreasing. On the death of Dara in 1658 A. D. Raushanara Begam, his younger sister, who was favourably inclined towards Aurangzeb, gave a grand feast.[6] But such references gradually became rarer.

It appears that sometimes the wives of the nobles also prepared banquets. The wife of Jafar Khan ordered a grand banquet to be organised for Aurangzeb in the year 1665 A.D.[7]

The ladies not only organised feasts but also attended them too which proved to be another source of their entertainment. The mystic feast and Hindal's marriage-feast were attended by many ladies.[8] When Dildar Begam gave an entertainment in

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[1] Lamps were lighted all round. All those *Amirs* etc., who assembled, had drinks and rich food. *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 385-86.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 192.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15; Manucci, Vol. I, p. 163.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 359.

[7] Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 389.

[8] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 118-24. Gulbadan Begam while giving a vivid description of the feast, supplies a list of the ladies present there. Among them were Fakh-i-Jahan, Aq Begam, Sultan Bakht Begam, Khadija Begam, etc.

1541 A. D., it was attended by all the ladies of the court.[1]

On occasions such as birth of a prince (or princess), birthdays, circumcision and marriages the ladies also participated in the rejoicings and feasts.[2] When Hamida Banu Begam came from Qandhar in 1546 A. D., Akbar's circumcision feast was celebrated with great pomp and show and all the Begams attended the feast.[3] In the marriage of Shahriyar, when the feast of *Nikah* was held in the house of Itimad-ud-daula, the ladies also accompanied Jahangir to the feast.[4]

Fairs and Festivals

Another social activity of the ladies was their participation in fairs held during the feasts of New Year (*Nauroz*). Besides the court ladies, the wives and daughters of the great nobles, *Omrahs*, *Rajas*, etc. participated in it. These ladies would bring curios and various fine articles and open shops and act as shop-keepers. The Emperor, princes and princesses of the royal harem would go to buy things of their choice. The sellers and the Emperor who tried to act as broker higgled, exchanging pleasant and witty remarks. The best-witted and the most pleasant lady was admired most and sometimes she was able to extract double the price. All these ladies were entertained with feasts and dances of the *Kanchinies* (the professional dancers). This fair would last for about four or five days and is also referred to by the contemporary foreign travellers.[5] It is also referred to as *Mina Bazar*. It was started by Akbar and it appears to have been continued till the time of Emperor Shahjahan after whom no such references are found.

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[1] *Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat* by Jauhar, Tr. p. 30.

[2] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 343-44.

[3] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 179-80. Abul Fazl says, "The Begams graced the ceremony." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 484; *Tabqat* (E. & D.), Vol. V, p. 223.

[4] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 202.

[5] Peter Mundy says, "There is also at this time a Bazare . . . kept within the Mahall . . . the wives and daughters of all sorts, no man daringe to refuze the sending them if the king require them . . ." Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 238; Manucci, Vol. I, p. 195; Bernier (p. 272) says this fair was conducted by 'bewitching females'. Thevenot, pp. 70-71.

The festival of *Nauroz* (New Year), which was celebrated with great pomp and splendour by the Mughal sovereigns, was also witnessed by the queens and princesses. Some separate enclosures were prepared for them from which they could see every thing without being seen.[1] The chief ladies came and congratulated the queens and princesses. They were welcomed and given robes of honour. They stayed in the royal palace till the feast (which usually lasted from six to nine days) was over, and departed with presents known as *Kichri* (mixture of gold and precious stones).[2]

Outdoor Recreations

HUNTING

The outdoor recreations were also well within the reach of the ladies of royalty. It appears that some of them were interested in hunting and accompanied the Emperor on hunting expeditions (*Shikars*). They indulged in ordinary hunts such as *Qamargahs*, in which a large number of wild animals were driven into an enclosure for killing and deer-hunting. "On one occasion in Girjak when the ladies were present, 155 animals were killed."[3] On another occasion, when in 1611 A.D. Jahangir went for hunting at Somnagar, the ladies accompanied him and the antelopes of hunt were divided among the Begams.[4]

Nurjahan Begam seems to be the only lady who was a skilled shot and actively participated in hunting. In 1616 A.D. she shot a bird named "Qrisha, the like of which for size and beauty of colour had never been seen."[5] Again in the year 1617 A.D. when Jahangir went for hunting accompanied with the ladies, four tigers were marked by the huntsmen. Nurjahan, with the permission of Jahangir, killed all of them.[6] On this

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[1] Monserrate, pp. 175-76; De Laet, pp. 100-101; Coryat, *Early Travels*, p. 278; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 238.

[2] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 559-60. Manucci describes in detail how *Nauroz* was celebrated inside the harem. Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 345-46.

[3] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 129-30.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4; also Vol. II, pp. 73-74; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 58-59.

[5] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 348.

[6] Jahangir writes, "Until now such shooting was never seen that from the top of an elephant and inside of a *howdah* six shoots should made, not one miss so that the four beasts found no opportunity to spring

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occasion Jahangir was very pleased with her and gave her a pair of bracelets as reward and distributed one thousand *asharafis* (gold coins). On another occasion the huntsmen reported the arrival of a tiger. The Emperor asked them to surround the beast. As he had himself taken a vow not to kill or injure any living being, he asked Nurjahan to shoot the wild beast. Nurjahan from the litter so hit the tiger with one shot that it was immediately killed.[1]

Hunting being a strenuous recreation does not seem to have enjoyed popularity among the ladies. Except for Nurjahan who usually accompanied Jahangir in his hunting expeditions very few ladies were interested in this manly recreation.

A less strenuous and more enjoyable outdoor recreation was fishing. Some of the ladies accompanied with eunuchs used to move out for fishing.[2]

EXPEDITIONS

The Mughals had a peculiar practice of taking their wives along with them in the battlefield. They seem to have inherited this practice from their forefathers and continued it even after they had permanently settled in India. The ladies accompanied the royal cavalcade on military expeditions.[3] Careri, who visited India in 1695 A.D., said that Mughals marched at ease and carried their women with them.[4] Manucci also wrote that although the princesses and the ladies, when they marched, started in the last, they always arrived first, having taken a shorter route.[5]

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or move." *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 375. Chittarman Kayath says, She killed nine tigers and Jahangir distributed pearls. *Chahar Gulshan*, f. 156. She killed a *Nakh cheer* with her gun and the Emperor being pleased asked her to demand anything. *Fath Nama-i-Nurjahan Begam* by Shirazi, pp. 31-32.

[1] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 105; K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 289.

[2] K. Khan, p. 99.

[3] *The Army of the Indian Mughals, Its Organisation and Administration* by W. Irvine, pp. 200, 204-5.

[4] Careri, p. 184.

[5] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 74.

In 1526 A.D., when Babur went to Dholpur, Mahim Begam and Gulbadan Begam also went with the Emperor.[1] When Hindal was sent against Sher Khan near about 1534 A.D., he had Dildar Begam, Gulchehra Begam, Afghan Aghacha and the wives and families of various *Amirs* with them.[2] While he was marching, the Gawars pursued him but he defeated them, saved the women and sent them to Lahore. In 1539 A.D., when Humayun was fighting against Sher Khan in the Battle of Chausa, the Imperial harem suffered heavy loss. Some of the Begams who had accompanied him were either killed or lost in the battlefield.[3] Humayun also took along with him Hamida Banu Begam when he went against Maldeo in 1542 A.D.[4] In the year 1574 A.D. when Emperor Akbar went on an expedition to the East, some ladies went with him.[5] Again many ladies accompanied him when in 1599 A.D. he went on an expedition to the Deccan.[6]

This practice continued in the later reigns as well. The usual practice followed by the Mughals was that on the day of the battle these women mounted on elephants and were carefully guarded by the rear guards posted at some distance behind the centre where stood the Emperor and other chiefs.[7] On the march, after the cavalry came the Emperor followed by queens, princesses and ladies of the harem. They were carried on elephants surrounded with wooden blinds covered with thin muslin from which they could see without being seen. Other working women of the harem followed on horse backs rapped in long mantles.[8]

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[1] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 102.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37. Among those who were lost were Ayesha Sultan Begam, daughter of Sultan Husain Mirza, Begajan Kuka, wife of Qasim Husain Sultan Izbek, Aqiqa Begam of Babur's household, Chand Bibi etc. Humayun's wife Haji Begam fell into the hands of the enemy but was honourably treated and returned. *Life and Times of Humayun* by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, pp. 134-35.

[4] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 154.

[5] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 116, 122.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 1140.

[7] *The Army of the Indian Mughols, Its Organisation and Administration* by W. Irvine, p. 200.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-5.

EXCURSIONS

The ladies of the harem used to go for excursions, sight-seeing and also for visiting gardens and buildings etc.

During the reign of Babur, on the death of his son Alwar everyone felt very sad, especially Dildar Begam. Babur proposed to take his harem at Dholpur on excursion for a change.[1]

During the reign of Humayun many ladies went to see *Riwaj*[2] coming up on the hills and passed the night with the Emperor in delightful talks.[3] On another occasion the ladies went to visit a beautiful waterfall above Farza [between Laghman (Lamghan) and Balkh in Afghanistan] in the early hours of morning.[4] Humayun often used to visit the orange gardens. Once in 1550 A.D. some ladies, such as Bega Begam, Mah Chuchak Begam, Hamida Banu Begam, and others also accompanied him.[5]

In the reign of Akbar also sometimes the ladies accompanied the Emperor on sight-seeing excursions. In 1581 A.D., when Akbar was returning from Kabul, he visited *Bagh-i-Safa* accompanied by the ladies who were with him.[6] The reign of Jahangir is full of instances when the ladies went on excursions and pleasure-trips. In 1607 A.D., when Jahangir went to Kabul, the ladies of the harem accompanied him and were present at the entertainment which was held in the Shahr-ara-Garden.[7] In 1615 A.D., an entertainment was held at Ana Sagar tank. Jahangir ordered the hill to be lighted with lamps. The ladies were also present there.[1] In 1617 A.D. Jahangir, mounted with the ladies, went round to see the court and buildings on the Shakkar tank (in Mandu), founded by former rulers of Malwa.[2] In 1621 A.D. the Emperor went on a boat with some ladies to Nur Afshan garden where Nurjahan Begam entertained them.[3]

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[1] "As her lamentations passed due bounds", writes Gulbadan Begam, "His Majesty said to my lady and the Begams, 'Come, let us make an excursion to Dholpur'." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 103-4.

[2] *Riwaj* is a shrub two or three feet high in appearance like beet (*Sala*) . . . the flower is red and taste is sub acid with a little sweetness. *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 188 (Footnote).

[3] Gulbadan Begam gives a vivid description of how tents were pitched there and the Begams walked. "It was moonlight. We talked and told stories and Mir and Khanish Aghacha and Zarif the reciter and Saru Sahi and Shaham Agha sang softly softly." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 190.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-97.

[6] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, p. 543.

[7] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 107.

During the reign of Aurangzeb when he recovered from illness in 1664 A.D., he went to Kashmir and Lahore. Raushanara Begam accompanied him.[4] This practice continued in the later period also. When Roshan-ud-daula arranged illuminations and entertainment, Nawab Qudsia and other Begams went to witness and enjoy the gaiety on Lahori Darwaza. The wives of the nobles such as Itimad-ud-daula, Qamaruddin Khan and Nusrat Khan also witnessed the illumination.[5]

PILGRIMAGES

Besides this, some ladies were interested in going to pilgrimages, especially visiting Mecca, Medina or the shrines of saints. In this connection they had to make long journeys. The earliest reference of such a journey is found when Sultanam, the wife of Nizamuddin Ali Khalifa Barlas, was given leave by Humayun to go to Mecca, along with Gulbarg Begam.[6] Bega Begam, the wife of Humayun, who was later named as Haji Begam, was permitted to go on pilgrimage to the holy places and Emperor Akbar arranged it by providing all necessities.[7] In the year 1575 A.D. Emperor Akbar again made arrangements when Gulbadan Begam, along with many other ladies, went on a pilgrimage of the holy places.[8] The ladies who accompanied her were Salima Sultan Begam, Haji Begam, Gulzar Begam the daughter of Kamran, Sultan Begam, the wife of Askari, Kulsum Khanam, the grand-daughter of Gulbadan Begam, Gulnar Aga, the wife of Babur; Bibi Safiya, Bibi Sarw Sahai and Shaham Aga, servants of Zinnat Ashiyani.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 298. The Emperor writes, "I spent the most of that night with the ladies of the Mahall on the bank of that tank."

[2] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 384.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 199. Muatmid Khan also describes a journey made by Nurjahan and other Begums. *Iqbal Nama*, Tr. p. 138.

[4] Bernier, p. 351.

[5] Ashub, Vol. I, ff. 51b, 52a.

[6] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 169.

[7] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 366-67; Badauni, Vol. II, p. 308.

[8] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 205-6; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 472; *Tabqat* (E. & D.), Vol. V, pp. 391-2; *Tazkirah-i-Humayun-Wa-Akbar* by Bayazid, p. 355.

Some of the ladies made pilgrimages to the tombs of some famous saints. When Akbar left on foot for Khwaja Muinuddin's shrine at Ajmer, many ladies of the harem also accompanied him.[2] Gulbadan Begam and the other ladies, after their return from the holy pilgrimage, went to visit the shrine of saint Muinuddin.[3] In 1607 A.D. (during the reign of Jahangir) Ruqqayya Sultan Begam, the daughter of Hindal, also performed a pilgrimage to her father's tomb (at Kabul).[4] The ladies of Jahangir's harem accompanied him in 1619 A.D. when he went on a pilgrimage to the mausoleums of Humayun, Akbar, and Sheikh Nizamuddin Chishti.[5] Jahanara Begam, after her recovery from burns in 1644 A.D., went to visit the tomb of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer.[6]

Modes of Travelling

Princesses and the prominent ladies of the seraglio had different types of conveyances for travelling. Palanquin was used by well-to-do ladies. It was a covered litter carried on shoulders by eight men. It was covered with red serge and, in case of a rich lady, with velvet.[7] Some ladies travelled in *Chaudoulis*.[8] It was a box-like structure carried by two *Kahars* (bearers). It was painted and covered with silk-net fringes and tassels.[9] Capacious litters suspended between two camels or elephants called *Khajwah*[10] were also used by ladies. In summer

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 476-78; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 557; Pelsaert, p. 70.

[3] Badauni, Vol. II, p. 320.

[4] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 110.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 101, 109.

[6] *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. II, p. 422.

[7] Bernier, p. 372; Thevenot, p. 76; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 189; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 31.

[8] Bernier, p. 371; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, pp. 190-1.

[9] Bernier, p. 371; Manucci, pp. 72-73; Tavernier, Vol. I, pp. 392-93; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p.190.

[10] Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 191; Bernier, p. 372.

Khus was put on its four sides. A special type of carriage was used by princesses when they visited the house of a noble. It was generally pulled by female attendants.[1] It had wheels and there was space for one person only to sit in it. The ladies left the palanquin and changed into these carriages, which finally carried them to the inner recesses of the palaces visited. They also travelled on elephants.[2] These elephants had *Amaris* (a highly adorned dome-roofed throne) on their back and *Mikdembers* (a type of *hauda*) in which the ladies sat.[3] The animals were decked with bells and embroidered trappings. Usually long distances were covered on the elephants.

Coaches (of English style) were also used by the ladies.[4] It appears that after the reign of Jahangir the use of coach fell out of fashion.

Elephants, camels, mules and other beasts of burden were maintained by the Emperor, not only for military purposes, but also for the use of his harem.[5] While travelling, the royal ladies were accompanied by eunuchs, female guards and prominent noblemen.[6]

During the seventeenth century the retinue of the ladies increased and it looked like a big procession. No one could dare to come near their *Sawari* (carriage) nor have a glimpse of them. Even the *Mahavat* (the elephant driver) had to cover

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[1] Tavernier, Vol. I, pp. 392-93.

[2] Bernier, pp. 373; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 62.

[3] Bernier (p. 372) writes, "These lovely and distinguished females, seated in *Mikdembers*, are thus elevated above the earth, like so many superior beings borne along through the middle region of the air."

[4] Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 31. Thomas Roe presented a coach to Nurjahan Begam and she often rode in it. *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mughal*, Vol. II, p. 324.

[5] *Voyage to Surat* by Ovington, p. 191.

[6] Monserrate (p. 79) writes, "The queens ride on female elephants, hidden from view in gaily decorated *howdahs*. They are guarded and escorted by five hundred men of very dignified and venerable appearance. Great care is taken to drive away to a great distance all who are found in the line of the queen's march. . . . The ladies-in-waiting of the queens follow their mistresses on camels under white sun shades."

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his head with a coarse cloth.[1] Bernier confirms this and writes, "They were inaccessible to the sight of man."[2] Eunuchs and soldiers removed everybody aside. A commonly current proverb in the Mughal army was that one should be aware of a rear approach to the *Sawari* of the great ladies.[3]

The pompous processions of the Seraglio are graphically described by Manucci and Bernier. Manucci writes, "When Begam Sahib leaves her palace to go to court, she proceeds in great pomp, with much cavalry and infantry and many eunuchs . . . sorrounded her closely, push on one side everyone they find in front of them, shouting out, pushing and assaulting everyone without the least respect of persons. The same is done by all the princesses of the blood-royal when they come out."[4] At another place, Manucci remarks, "They proceed very slowly, men in front sprinkling water on the roadways to lay the dust. They are placed in a palanquin which has over it a rich cloth or with net of gold, sometimes ornamented with precious stones or pieces of looking glass."[5]

Bernier also writes that Raushanara Begam rode on a Pegu elephant "blazing with gold and azure, is followed by five or six other elephants with *Mikdembers* . . . filled with ladies attached to her household." Her elephant was surrounded by "a troop of female servants, *Tartars* and *Kachmerys*, fantastically attired and riding handsome pad-horses." Behind them came eunuchs on horses and footmen with large canes who "advance a great way before the princess, both to right and to the left, for the purpose of clearing the road and driving before them every intruder." Behind Raushanara's retinue "appears a principal lady of the court, mounted and attended much in the same manner as the princess. This lady is followed by a third, she by a fourth, and so on, until fifteen or sixteen females of quality pass with a grandeur of appearance, equipage,

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[1] Manucci remarks, "Princesses and nobles' wives are shut up in such a manner that they cannot be seen, although they can observe the passer-by." Manucci, Vol. II, p. 72-73.

[2] Bernier, p. 373; Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 72-73.

[3] Bernier, p. 374.

[4] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 220.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 230; Bernier, pp. 372-74.

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and retinue more or less proportionate to their rank, pay and office."[1] Wives of the nobles also moved in the same manner and dignity; one such example was that of the wife of Jafar Khan.[2]

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[1] Bernier, pp. 372-73.

[2] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 220.

7

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE LADIES OF ROYALTY—II

Charity

Some of the royal ladies who were kind, generous and benevolent spent a considerable portion of their personal allowances in charity. After the funeral of Babur in 1530 A.D., his wife Mahim Begam made some endowments.[1] Another such lady was Haji Begam, the wife of Humayun. On her way to pilgrimage to Mecca, Haji Begam distributed large benefactions and charities to the inhabitants of these places.[2] Throughout her widowhood she devoted her time in alms-giving and maintained five hundred poor people by her alms.[3] When Gulbadan Begam returned from pilgrimage in 1585 A.D., she also bestowed largess to the crowd.[4]

Nurjahan Begam's charity was boundless. She helped poor girls in their marriages by providing dowries to them.[5] She had collected many maid-servants in the palace and she married them to *Ahadis* (gentlemen troopers) of the palace. It is stated that on prescribed days of bath she would distribute three thousand rupees in alms.[6]

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[1] Gulbadan Begam writes, "My lady made an allowance of food twice daily. . . . She gave this from her own estate. . . ." *G. H. N.* (Bev.), p. 111.

[2] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 484.

[3] Monserrate, p. 96.

[4] *Ibid.*, p, 205.

[5] *Tatimmai-Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* by Muhammad Hadi (E. & D.) Vol. VI, p. 399; *Iqbal Nama* (E. & D.), Vol. VI, p. 405; Beni Prasad, p. 185.

[6] *Maasir*, Vol. II, p. 1078.

Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shahjahan, was also a very generous lady. She used to present to the Emperor the cases of the helpless and the destitutes.[1] On her recommendation many persons received stipends and help from the state. One of such beneficiaries was Hakim Rukna Kashi who was given twenty-four thousand of rupees on her recommendation.[2] At her instance many girls were given dowries for their marriages.[3] In these charitable works the Empress was helped by her *Nazir*, Satiunnissa.

Jahanara Begam, the eldest daughter of Shahjahan, was very pious and philanthropic lady. Once when Shahjahan recovered from his illness, Jahanara, along with other ladies of the harem, distributed fifty thousand of rupees to the poor.[4] After the death of the Emperor she sent two thousand gold coins to be given to the poor.[5]

Aurangzeb's daughter Zinatunnisa Begam was also of a charitable disposition. Many people received their livelihood from her bounty.[6] She also built many caravansarais for the benefit of travellers.[7]

This benevolent attitude of the ladies continued even during the later period. Lal Kunwar, the favourite of Jahandar Shah, was of a very kind nature and freely distributed food and money to the poor and the needy.[8]

Construction and Supervision of Buildings

During the Mughal period some ladies took keen interest in the construction and supervision of buildings. The first lady who seems to have paid her attention towards building activities was Haji Begam, the wife of Humayun. After the death of Humayun, his tomb was built under her supervision. She also built an

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[1] Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 11-12.

[2] Qazwini, Vol. II, f. 277.

[3] Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 11-12; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. I, p. 249.

[4] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 572.

[5] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 126.

[6] *M.A.*, p. 323.

[7] Norris writes, "This princess had built fourteen carvansarais on the roads out of charity to poor travellers and merchants." Norris, p. 236.

[8] Ashub, Vol. I, f. 36a.

Arab Sarai for the accommodation of Arab travellers and merchants.[1] Besides this, a royal house and garden was built by her on the road from Agra to Bayana.[2]

After her, Salima Sultan Begam, the wife of Akbar seems to have built her tomb. She was buried in the buildings in Mandakar Garden which she herself had laid out.[3]

The mother of Jahangir, known as Maryam-uz-Zamani, built a baoli (step well) in the pargana of Jasut. It was a grand construction and cost about twenty thousand of rupees.[4] Nurjahan was also interested in building projects. At her instance, her Vakils built a house and garden at Nursarai and, after its completion, she gave a feast.[5] Her officials also built a sarai at Sikanderabad.[6] Besides Nurjahan, during the reign of Jahangir in 1619 A.D. another lady Aqa Aqayan, who was in his service, built a sarai in Delhi.[7]

Purhunar Banu Begam, the daughter of Shahjahan, was buried in a mausoleum which was said to have been built by a mason under her direction.[8]

Jahanara Begam was a fairly noted builder. In Lahore a bazar was built under the instructions of Begam Saheb (as she was known), who also chalked out its plan, and this was known as Chowk Sarai.[9] She built a mosque in Agra out of her personal allowances in order to gain everlasting fame, reputation and reward in the life to come. Earlier Emperor Shahjahan had been interested in building the same mosque out of his personal financial resources, but later he allowed Jahanara to build it.[1] The Begam also constructed a monastery (*Rabat*).[2] In the village of Achchol, which belonged to her, she built a house for herself.[3] In Kashmir she built a house for the poor at a cost of twenty thousand of rupees.[4] She also built a caravansarai with a lovely garden and reservoir in Delhi.[5] In the caravansarai of Begem Saheb only the great Mughal and Persian merchants were permitted to stay.[6]

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[1] *Humayun Badshah* by Banerji, Vol. II, p. 317; Monserrate, p. 96.

[2] Thevenot (p. 57) writes, "Upon the road from Agra to Bayana there is a royal house built by the queen mother of Ecbar (Haji Begam) with gardens kept in very good order."

[3] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 233 (The garden probably was situated near Agra). In Hindi translation the name of garden is 'Anandkar'. (*Tuzuk*, Hindi, p. 302).

[4] Jahangir praises the baoli writing, "Certainly the baoli was a grand building and had been built exceedingly well. I ascertained from the officials that a sum of Rs. 20,000/- had been expended on this well." *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 64.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 192; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 78.

[6] Pelsaert, p. 4.

[7] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 111.

[8] *M.A.*, p. 90

[9] *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 47.

The lady last in our reference who seems to have taken interest in building construction was Zinatunnisa Begam, the daughter of Aurangzeb. She built near about fourteen caravansarais.[7] She was buried in the Zinat-ul-Masjid which was built at her expense in Delhi.[8]

Gardens

The interest in laying gardens was not confined to the males alone in the Mughal family. Some of the ladies were also interested in laying out gardens. Among them were Bika Begam, the grandmother of Akbar, Miriam Makani, the grandmother of Jahangir and Shahr Banu Begam, daughter of Mirza Abu Said who was aunt of Emperor Babur.[9] Jahangir's mother, Maryam-uz-Zamani, made a garden in the pargana of Jasut[10] which cost about twenty thousand of rupees. Nurjahan Begam also has the credit of having designed and inspired so many lovely pleasure-spots.[1] Her garden called Shah Dara was built near Lahore.[2] Her Vakils built another garden in Nur Sarai.[3]

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[1] Lahori, Vol. I, Part II, p. 252.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 469.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 51.

[4] K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 706.

[5] Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 49; Thevenot, pp. 60, 280-81; Manucci, Vol. I, p. 221.

[6] Manucci, Vol. I, p. 221.

[7] One of her caravansarais was visited by Norris when he arrived at Navapur. (Norris, p. 236).

[8] Sarkar, Vol. I, p. 70, Vol. III, p. 62. "It is said that she demanded the amount of her dowry, and instead of getting married, built this mosque.

[9] Jahangir refers to these gardens in his memoirs. He writes, "First of all I walked round the Shaharara . . . then in a garden that Bika Begam, grandmother of my father, had made, . . . then a garden that Maryam Makani, my own grandmother, had prepared. The Shaharara garden was made by Shaharara Banu Begam (daughter of Mirza Abu Said) who was own aunt of the late king Babur." *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 106-7.

[10] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 64.

Aqa Aqayan, who was in the service of Jahangir, also built a garden for her in Delhi.[4]

Jahanara Begam owned many gardens. One of them was situated at Ambala,[5] and another at Surat.[6] She also seems to have inherited or received some gardens as gifts. After the death of Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara received *Bagh-i-Jahanara*,[7] whereas *Bagh-i-Shaharara* was given to her by her father.[8] She had also a garden in Bachchol which had various trees and canals.[9] She possessed three more gardens in Kashmir *Bagh-i-Aishabad*, *Bagh-i-Nur Afshan* and *Bagh-i-Safa*[10] which were laid out under the supervision of Jawahar Khan Khwajasara.[11]

Raushanara Begam also built a garden near the city of Delhi which is known after her name.[12]

One of Aurangzeb's wives, Bibi Akbarabadi, built a garden in imitation of Kashmir and Lahore (Shalimar) gardens.[13] It took four years to finish it and cost about rupees two lakhs. Zebunnisa also did not lag behind in planting gardens.[14]

Marriages

Some of the ladies played a significant role in arranging the marriages. They looked after the management of the marriages so arranged.

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[1] *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by Stuart, p. 126.

[2] Jahangir gives a vivid description of it in his Memoirs. *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 76; Peter Mundy, Vol. II, p. 214.

[3] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 192.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[5] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 584; Lahori, Vol. I, Part II, p. 7, also Vol. II, Part I, p. 115; Waris, f. 70.

[6] Thevenot, p. 35; Stavorinus, Vol. II, p. 468, Vol. III, p. 177.

[7] Lahori, Vol. II, Part I, p. 99.

[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 587.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 428.

[10] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 27; Description of Bagh-i-Safa given by him in Vol. I, Part I, p. 195.

[11] *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. II, p. 36.

[12] *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by Stuart, p. 108.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

During the reign of Babur his sister Khanzada Begam, his aunts, and wife Mahim Begam took special delight in arranging marriages. When Babur fell ill, he asked for the consent of his wife Mahim Begam and his aunts for the marriage of his daughters Gulrang with Isan Taimur Sultan, and Gulchehra with Tukta Bugha Sultan. It was with their consent that the marriage was solemnised.[1]

Mahim Begam, the mother of Humayun, wanted to see his son. Whenever she saw a pretty and nice girl she used to bring her into her own service for being married to him. A lady named Maywa Jan was in the service of Gulbadan Begam. It was for Mahim's wish that Humayun married her.[2] Another wife of Babur, Dildar Begam also took interest in arranging marriages. Humayun wanted to marry Hamida Banu Begam, the daughter of Mir Baba Dost, and expressed his desire to Dildar Begam. Hindal objected to the marriage, considering the lady as his sister. Humayun got annoyed. But Dildar Begam carried on the negotiations. For forty days the matter was discussed. Hamida Banu Begam was not willing to marry Humayun; but at last, when Dildar advised her several times she agreed and in 1541 A.D. Humayun married her.[3]

During the reign of Akbar, Maham Anaga took active interest in marriage negotiations. Salima Sultan Begam was betrothed to Bairam Khan in the reign of Humayun. Akbar consented to their marriage. All the court ladies, specially Bika Begam and Maham Anaga showed great alacrity in furthering the marriage negotiations.[1] Maham also formed the design of marrying her elder son Adham Khan to the daughter of Baqi Begam.[2]

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[1] Gulbadan Begam writes, "My chicha herself and Badiul Jamal Begam and Aq Begam, both of whom were paternal aunts of His Majesty were conducted into the hall. Having raised an estrade and spread carpets and chosen a propitious hour Maham's nanacha made both Sultans bow the knee in order to exalt them to the rank of son-in-laws." *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 107.

[2] Mahim went near Humayun and said, "Humayun, Maywa Jan is not bad, why do you not take her into your service ?" *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 112.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-51; *Tabqat*; Vol. II, p. 78; *Tabqat* (E. & D.), Vol. V, p. 207; *Tazkirat-ul-Waqiat* by Jauhar, pp. 30-31; Badauni, Vol. I, p. 560.

Jahanara Begam played an active role in arranging the marriages of her brothers. She took the place of her mother Mumtaz Mahal, who died very early, and made all necessary arrangements. She took the responsibility of performing Dara's marriage which could not be performed in the life-time of Mumtaz Mahal who had already made some arrangements. Now Jahanara assumed the task. She collected all the presents which consisted of precious jewels, clothes and other gifts and arranged them at one place.[3] In these arrangements she was assisted by Satiunnisa.[4] The Emperor (Shahjahan), along with his nobles, came to inspect them. He was also accompanied by the ambassador of Balkh who was amazed to see them.[5] On the side of the bride, Iffat Jahan Banu Begam, the mother-in-law of Dara, made all the arrangements and gave precious presents in the marriage.[6]

Jahanara Begam also made the arrangements of the marriage of Aurangzeb[7] and Shuja.[8]

In 1673 A.D. when Zubdatunnisa Begam (daughter of Aurangzeb) was married to Sipihr Shukoh (younger son of Dara) the marriage ceremonies were arranged by Gauharara Begam, the daughter of Shahjahan, and Hamida Banu Begam.[9]

Again the celebrations of the marriage entertainments of Muizuddin in 1684 A.D. were supervised by Zinatunnisa Begam, the daughter of Aurangzeb.[10]

Not only did the ladies take active part in arranging marriages, but the nuptials were often celebrated in their dwellings.

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, pp. 97-8.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-5; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 251.
[3] Qazwini, Vol. III, f. 498.
[4] *Ibid.*, f. 499.
[5] *Ibid.*, f. 500.
[6] *Ibid.*, ff. 491, 500.
[7] *Ibid.*, f. 507.
[8] Lahori, Vol. I, Part II, p. 267.
[9] *M.A.*, p. 77.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

The marriages of Salim,[1] Murad[2] and Shakrunnisa Begam[3] took place in the palace of Miriam Makani, the mother of Akbar. Similarly the marriages of Jahangir,[4] Parwez[5] and Ladli Begam[6] were performed in the house of Maryam-uz-Zamani, the mother of Jahangir. The marriage ceremonies of Jahanzeb Begam (in 1668 A.D.), the daughter of Dara, was solemnised in the house of Jahanara Begam.[7]

Presents

Some of the ladies received valuable presents and rarities from the Emperor, princes and the nobles. But on occasions such as accessions, birthdays, weighing-ceremonies, they also made presents to the Emperor.[8]

In 1526 A. D., after defeating Ibrahim, Babur sent through Khwaja Kilan Beg some of the valuable curiosities of Hindustan to his sisters and elder relations of the harem.[9] During the reign of Humayun in the mystic feast "gifts were bestowed in the form of *Asharfies* and *Shahrukhis* to the Begams."[10] Not only this, the Emperor ordered all the Mirzas and Begams to bring gifts and everyone did so.[11]

Emperor Akbar also used to make valuable presents to the ladies on *Nauroz* festival. Miriam Makani, Gulbadan Begam and other Begams were the usual beneficiaries of such presents.[12] The Emperor used to go to his mother's apartments where nobles offered gifts to the Queen Mother.[13]

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[1] *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 969-70.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 791.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 990, 1059.

[4] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 144-45.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 202.

[7] *M.A.*, p. 47; Sarkar, Vol. III, p. 64.

[8] Thevenot, p. 67.

[9] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), pp. 94-96. Each Begam was given a dancing girl with one gold plate full of jewels and two small mother-of-pearl trays full of *Asharfies* and on two other Shahrukhis.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 25, 365.

[11] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 124.

[12] *Tabqat*, Vol. II, pp. 559 60.

[13] De Laet, p. 101.

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References indicate that on the occasion of his marriage in 1612 A. D. Khurram made some presents to the Begams also.[1] In 1617 A. D. he presented two lakhs of rupees to Nurjahan Begam and sixty thousand of rupees to the other Begams.[2] In 1614 A. D. Jahangir presented a string of pearls to Ehsan Begam, mother of Nurjahan, who had the honour of inventing *Itr-i-Jahangiri.*[3] Itimad-ud-daula prepared a royal entertainment in 1619 A. D. when he made offerings to Jahangir and in addition gave presents worth one lakh of rupees in jewelled ornaments and clothes to the Begams and other ladies of the palace.[4] In 1622 A. D. a merchant from Turkey brought two large pearls. Nurjahan Begam bought them for sixty thousand rupees and presented them to Emperor Jahangir.[5]

During the reign of Shahjahan Shukrunnisa Begam, the aunt of Shahjahan, came from Akbarabad to congratulate the king on his victory at Balkh and presented him *Lals* (precious stones) worth four lakhs of rupees. The Emperor also gave her one lakh of rupees as present.[6] Queen Mumtaz Mahal presented many things in the form of *Peshkash* to the Emperor.[7] Jahanara Begam, the favourite daughter of Shahjahan, also did not lag behind in offering presentations to him.[8] On the occasion of the Emperor's Weighing-Ceremony she gave a pearl which valued thirty-one *sarakh* and forty thousand rupees[9] and sent gold and silver for *nisar* (distribution).[10]

On the accession of Aurangzeb, Begam Saheb and other ladies sent presents to Aurangzeb which consisted of precious jewels.[11] After his coronation, he also gave presents to the Begams.[12] On the occasion of his weighing ceremony, Begams again sent

[1] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 224-25.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 401.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 80.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[6] K. Khan., Vol. I, p. 646.

[7] Waris, Vol. II, ff. 211, 292, 317, 371; Qazwini, Vol. II, p. 364.

[8] Lahori, Vol. I, Part I, p. 245, Vol. II, Part II, p. 12, Vol. II, Part II, p. 582; Qazwini, Vol. II, p. 290.

[9] *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 199; Waris, Vol. II, f. 28a.

[10] Lahori, Vol. II, Part I, p. 351; Waris, Vol. I, p. 701.

[11] *M.A.*, p. 19.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 14; K. Khan, Vol. II, p. 77.

presents.[1] Abdullah Khan, the expelled king of Kashgar, who had come to Delhi in 1668 A. D. received valuable presents from Jahanara consisting of twenty thousand of rupees along with a jewelled dagger, a betel case etc. This present was given through the Emperor.[2] Other ladies of his harem like Purhunar Banu Begam, Gauharara Begam,[3] the daughters of Shahjahan, Iffatara and Getiara Begams, the daughters of Muhammad Azam, received valuable presents from the Emperor.[4] This practice continued in the later Mughal period.

Presents from Foreign Travellers

In order to win the favour of the Emperors the foreign travellers, who visited India during this period, also offered presents to some prominent ladies of the harem. In 1608 A.D. William Hawkins presented jewels to Shakurunnisa Begam, the sister of Jahangir and his paramour (Nurjahan).[5] Another traveller, Coryat, who came in 1612 A. D. at the time of leaving Agra gave a gold whistle studded with rubies to Jahangir which he later gave 'to one of his great women.'[6] Thomas Roe also followed their footsteps and gave various presents to Nurjahan. He gave her an English coach, a mirror chest and toys etc.[1] Tavernier, who visited India in 1640 A. D. gave presents to the Emperor and his sister Jahanara.[2] She also received presents from the English in the form of oils, broad-cloth, mirrors, cabinet and embroidered cloth etc.[3]

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[1] *M.A.*, p. 46; Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 80; K. Khan, Vol. I, pp. 396, 400, 425.

[2] *M.A.*, p. 46.

[3] In 1667 A. D., on the occasion of *Id* Begam Saheb, Purhunar Banu Begam and Gauharara Begam received rewards. *M.A.*, p. 36.

During the marriage of Azam in 1669 A.D. Begam Saheb received present of an elephant and Jahanzeb Begam, the daughter of Dara, two horses. *M.A.*, p. 49.

In 1617 A. D. Purhunar Banu Begam and Gauharara Begam, the daughters of Shahjahan, each was presented five thousand *mohars*. *M.A.*, p. 67; K. Khan, p. 77.

[4] In 1706 A. D. Getiara and Iffatara Begams, the daughters of Muhammad Azam, each were presented with ornaments varying in prices from eight to ten thousand. *M.A.*, p. 306.

[5] Hawkins who came in 1608 A. D. writes, "Knowing the custome of these moores that without gifts and bribes nothing would either goe forward or bee accomplished. I sent my broker to seeke out for jewels fitting for the kings sister (Shakarunnisa) and new paramour . . ." Hawkins, *Early Travels*, p. 94.

[6] Coryat, *Early Travels*, p. 67.

Dresses

Dress occupied a fairly prominent place in the life of the ladies of royalty and nobility. In the days when the upper class ladies had very limited occupation and their physical charm was the only passport of royal favour, most of them devoted their utmost attention to their dresses. Women of royalty and nobility wore elegant and costly dresses and took pleasure in being daintily dressed so that they may look pretty and attractive.

The material used in the dresses were usually thin silk, *Doria* (striped cloth), and muslin. Sironj (Malwa) Muslin was in great demand and the merchants were ordered to send it only to Mughal seraglio or to the nobles and courtiers. Sometimes the dresses consisted of *Zarbaft* (cloth woven by golden thread), *Tiladoz*, *Mukkeshkar*, *Kimkhwabs* (varieties of cloth made of gold) and *Kalabattu* (golden trinkets).[4] The dresses were embroidered with gold and silver. Laces were added to make them more graceful. They were scented with essence of rose and other perfumes.[5] The dress once worn was not put on many times.[6] The difference between the dress of royalty, nobility and the middle class lay mostly in quality, material and price rather than in style.

It may be presumed that during the time of Babur and Humayun the Mughal ladies of the Imperial harem continued to put on the dresses of their respective countries like Persia and Khurasan. Women of royalty wore drawers which were wide and loose. They covered their upper part with a shirt which was fastened at the back. Another garment with a V-shaped collar was also used. In addition to them, an upper garment named *Yaleek* was also in vogue. It was buttoned in front, had a deep neck and had either half sleeves or full sleeves.[1] Some other garments in use those days were *Postan*, *Ulbag*, *Banich*[2] and *Tárhat*.[3]

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[1] *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mughal*, Vol. II, pp. 324, 384, 386, 427, 458.

[2] Tavernier, Vol. I, p. 141.

[3] *English Factory Records (1651-1654)*, pp. 11, 12; *(1646-50)*, p. 304.

[4] Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 44; Ashub, Vol. I, f. 130a.

[5] Lahori, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 363-64; Manucci, Vol. II, p. 340.

[6] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 341; Bernier, p. 258. Some foreign travellers give incredible account of the cost of their dresses. Bernier calculates the cost of drawer alone at 12 or 15 crowns. Manucci says that each garment cost them Rs. 40 or 50 without lace.

In course of time, however, the process of assimilation did set in motion and Indian pattern began to fascinate Muslim women of the upper classes. It was but natural, more so due to the climate, modifications became essential. The beginning of this process may be traced from the time of Humayun. While Humayun's queens and princesses put on dresses resembling those of Turkish women, they dressed their hair in typical Hindu way. They no longer let their 'hair loose and parted but twisted them into a flat pad at the back from which a few curls rolled on.'[4] During the end of Humayun's reign Turkish ladies started using the ornaments which the Hindu women usually wore.

As regards the head-dress of the Mughal ladies, the *Taj-kulah*, which was the favourite head-gear of queens and princesses uptil the fifteenth century, started losing its popularity.[5] In Humayun's time the ladies used a high crested cap called *Taqi*. It was worn by unmarried girls while the married wore a *Taqi*, with a veil hanging called *Lachaq* or *Qasaba*.[6] Ladies of high families added plumes also to their caps.[7] The *Taqi* lost its popularity long before Akbar's death and was used only by maids, women guards etc. Some ladies also wore turbans decorated with pearls and plumes. It was a special privilege allowed by the Emperor to a select few.[8]

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[1] *Kaumudi*, p. 98.

[2] *Ibid.*, Kaumudi identifies it with Farzi in style but with a slit in the sleeve.

[3] It was a sort of cloak made of camel's hair and was hung from the shoulder. *Catalogue of Indian Collection*, Plates iii, v.

[4] *Kaumudi*, p. 96.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *G.H.N.* (Bev.), p. 138.

[7] *Kaumudi*, p. 96.

[8] The use of turban is described both by Pietra Della Valle and

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The reign of Akbar is significant with regard to the evolution of women's costume. This process was given impetus by the entrance of Rajput princesses in his harem.[1] Broad-minded and liberal as Akbar was, he allowed them to continue their own patterns of dress. This occasioned a marked change in fashion and style.

The main item of wear for the Rajput ladies was *Angiya* or tight fitting bodice. It could be half sleeved or full sleeved. Its length diminished with time. We have copious references in Hindi literature with regard to the form and use of this item of dress.[2] Below the *Angiya, Lahanga* (long skirt) was worn.[3] To the two ends of *Izarband* (binding cord) were attached bunches of pearls to add elegance and beauty to the dress. Finally, to complete the set, *Odhni* was used. It was a piece of large cloth and was used for covering the upper part of the body and head.[4]

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Manucci. Pietra Della Valle says, "Sometimes women wear a turban too, coloured and wrought with gold." Vol. I, p. 44. Picture of a lady with turban on her head, Plate lxvi of Stchoukine.

Manucci says, "It is extremely becoming and makes the wearer look very graceful." Vol. II, p. 339.

[1] For the list of Rajput ladies who entered the Mughal harem see Appendix 'F'.

[2] *Sursagar*, Part I, p. 622; *Neele Angiya*, Part II, p. 1219

"पीरी अंगिया पहिरे नदनूतन झूमत सारी"

Angiya is also referred to as *Kanchuki* or *Choli*. See *Sursagar*, Part I, pp. 265, 530, 606, 651, 654, 780, Part II, pp. 945, 992, 1219 etc; *Mira Bai ki Shabdavali*, p. 64; *Rahiman Vilas*, pp. 345, 39, 43; *Raskhan Granthavali* (Sujan Raskhan), pp. 38, 39, 62; *Mati Ram Satsai*, pp. 452, 475, 501; 503; *Mati Ram Granthavali* (Ras Raj), pp. 308, 319, 320, 347.

[3] *Padmavat* of Jayasi, p. 176

तारा मंडल पहिरि मल चोला :
मैकोरिन संग पहिरि पटोरा। p. 177.

Meera ki Shabdavali, pp. 13, 64; *Sursagar*, Part I, pp. 606, 619, (लाल लँहगा), p. 780.

[4] *Sursagar*, Part I, pp. 205, 760 "आंचल उड़ति न जानि"; *Meera ki Shabdavali*, p. 25; *Rahiman Vilas*, pp. 33, 42,45; *Bihari Satsai*, p. 42, Doha 118

"सुरंग कुसंभी चूनरी दुरंग देह द्युति होय"

Mati Ram Granthavali (Ras Raj), p. 323.

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The dress of the Muslim ladies consisted of *Pishwaz* and tight trousers. The former was fastened at the waist and hung even below the knees like skirts. It had a 'V' collar which opened in the front. The trousers were worked in golden thread, forming pretty designs—floral or geometrical.[1] Like Hindu ladies the Muslims also used *Dupatta*.[2]

In the hands of Nurjahan the form and style of female attire further developed. She revolutionized the art of dressing. She designed various new dresses of brocade and lace-gowns etc. Famous among them are '*Nur Mahali*' dress (for bride and bride-groom), '*Do dami*' for *Peshwaz* (gowns), *Panch tolia* for *Orhnis* (veils), *Badlah* (brocade), *Kinari* (Lace) and *Farsh-i-chandini* (carpets of sandalwood colour).[3]

An elegant item of female dress[4] known as 'Jammu female dress' appeared in this period. It consisted of a tight fitting *Kurti* hanging upto knees with tight sleeves fastened upto the breast. It was decorated with frills in the front and was worn along with short *Angiya*. In the lower part tight fitting trousers were worn. The material used for trousers was silk either printed with flowers or striped.[5] Light thin cloth was used for veil. Dancing girls wore practically the same type of dress, but their *Kurti* was longer. It was made of fine material called Sironj Muslin which was very thin and flimsy.

During the reign of Shahjahan the same dress continued, except one change. The *Kurti* grew in length and reached upto ankle.

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This set of dress is also referred to in *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 312, Stchoukine Plates lii, lvi depict ladies wearing *Choli* and *Lahanga*. The ends of *Izarband* are tucked with pearls.

[1] Forbes, Vol. I, pp. 262-63. *Indian costume*, p. 141. *Catalogue of Indian Collection*, Plates, iii, v, xxxvi, xlvii, li, Plates in Stchoukine, xli, lxxi show long *Kurta*, trouser (flowered), *Dupatta* (long scarf) and slippers.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] K. Khan, Vol. I, p. 269; *Ain*, Vol. I, p. 510; Beni Prasad, p. 183; *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* by Dr. R. P. Tripathi, p. 422; *Society and Culture in Mughal Age* by P. N. Chopra, p. 13.

[4] *Kaumudi*, p. 100.

[5] Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 44.

In the reign of Aurangzeb, Zebunnisa is said to have introduced a woman's garment called *Angiya-Kurti*.[1] For sometime *Angiya* was not worn with *Kurti*, but again it came into fashion.[2] This mode of dress continued in the later Mughal period.

The ladies also wore heel-less slippers called *Paposh*. They were of various patterns,[3] and sometimes were decorated with golden flowers.[4]

Toilet

Next to dress was toilet which mostly occupied the attention of the ladies of royalty and nobility. By using various cosmetics they enhanced their beauty. In India sixteen forms of personal adornment such as bathing, dressing, using ornaments and cosmetics, were prevalent. These have been described by Malik Muhammad Jayasi in his *Padmavat*.[5] This is confirmed by Abul Fazl who gives a vivid description of women's toilet in *Ain-i-Akbari*.[6] Among them were bathing, anointing, wearing dresses and ornaments, using henna and betel.

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[1] *Dewan of Zebunnisa* by Magan Lal, p. 14.

[2] *Kaumudi*, p. 103.

[3] Thevenot, p. 37.

[4] *Kaumudi*, p. 101.

[5] *Padmavat* of Jayasi, p. 287-88

“प्रथमहि मज्जन होई सरीरू, पुनि पहरे तन चंदन चीरू
साजि मांग पुनि सेंदुर सारा, पुनि लिलाट रचि तिलक संवारा
पुनि अंजन दुहूँ नैन करेई, पुनि कानन्ह कुंडल पहिरेई
पुनि नासिक भल फूल अमोला, पुनि राता मुख खाई तमोला
गियं आभरन पहिरे जंह ताई, औ पहिरे कर कंगन कलाई
कटि छुद्रावलि अभरन पूरा, औ पायल पायन्ह भल चूरा
बारह आभरन एह बखाने, तै पहिरै बारहौं असथाने”

[6] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 312. They are bathing, anointing with sandal-wood, unguents, wearing dresses of various kinds, sectarial marks of caste, using collyrium, wearing earrings, adorning with nose-ring of pearls and gold, wearing ornaments round the neck, decking with garlands of flowers or pearls, staining hands, wearing belt with hanging bells decorating feet with ornaments, eating *pan*. The 'Sringar' of Radha is described in the same manner by Surdas in *Sursagar*, Part II, pp. 993, 994.

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Before taking bath unguents were rubbed on the body. After bath sweet-scented pastes were rubbed (*Chandan Anradaga*) and scented clothes were put on.[1] Long wavy locks of hair were oiled, combed, and plaited.[2] Hindu ladies parted their hair and twisted it behind their head. They often made rolls of hair on one side and did not bind it or made it in tresses. Girls allowed their hair to grow from the age of twelve onwards.[3] The hair of the Muhammadan women hung down behind them twisted with silk.[4] Women also used flowers and ornaments to decorate their hair.[5] Vermilion was applied between the parting of the hair by the Hindu married ladies.[6] *Bindi* was fixed on the

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प्यारी अंग सिंगार कियौ,
बैनी रची सुभग कर अपने, टीका भाल दियौ
मोतिन मांग संवारी प्रथमहि केसरि आड सवारि
लोचन मंजि स्त्रवन तरिवन छवि कौकहि कंह निवार
नासा नथ अतिहि छवि राजति, अधरन बीरा रंग ॥

Paintings also bear testimony to the toilet of the ladies. Stchoukine, Plates lxxxi, lxxxix.

[1] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 40.

[2] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 40. Reference of *Beni* is made in *Ramchandrika*, Part II, pp. 193-94 "भांति भांति कवरी शुभ देखी"; *Sursagar*, Part I, p, 265 'बैनी सिथिल गुही', p. 619 'विविध बैनी रचीं', p. 780 'बैनी गूथी', Part II, pp. 945, 970-71, 980; *Bihari Satsai*, p. 14 'बैनी बंधे'; *Mati Ram Granthavali* (Ras Raj), p. 388 'गूंदी गुपाल के हाथ की बैनी'; *Satsai*, p. 468, 'बैनी गूंदते'; Senapati, *Kavit Ratnakar*, p. 43 'फूलन सौं बाल की बनाई गुही बैनी लाल'. Reference to Jura is also made in *Padmavat*, pp. 61, 96 and Bihari, p. 13

[3] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 40.

[4] Terry *Early Travels*, p. 309; De Laet says they also dress the hair forward in a knot from the back, p. 81; Careri says they cover their head but the hair hangs down behind in several tresses (Book II, p. 248).

[5] Fryer says "Their hair . . . grown in tresses which the rich embellish with gold, coronets and rich jewels the poor brade with string of Jasmine flower." Fryer, Vol. II, p. 117; Stavornius, Vol. I, p. 415.

[6] *Sursagar*, Part I, p. 205, 'सेंदुर मांग छुही', Part II, pp. 970-71, 'सीस सेंदुर'; *Rahiman Vilas*, p. 33, 'सोमित सेंदुर मांग'; Bhushan, *Shivraj Bhushan*, p. 124.

forehead.[1] Collyrium was used for the eyes.[2] Even artificial eye-brows were made with the help of collyrium. Some women used *Missi* (a kind of powder) for blackening their teeth.[3] To redden the lips and imparting sweet smell, betal leaf was used.[4] They also used *Mehndi* (henna) to dye their hands and feet.[5]

Ornaments

As in any other period, in the Mughal period also, ladies had great fancy for ornaments. They adorned themselves with various ornaments to look more charming and attractive. Twelve ornaments (from head to foot) were considered as standard in the Middle Ages. They were *Nupur*, *Kinkin*, *Kalava*, *Anguthi*, *Kankan*, *Angad*, *Har*, *Kanthashri*, *Besar*, *Khut*, *Tika* and *Shishphul*.[6] Abul Fazl, the Court-historian of Akbar, has enumerated the most popular ornaments in his *Ain-i-Akbari*, They were *Shishphul*, *Mang*, *Kot Bildar*, *Sekra*, *Binduli*, *Khuntila*, *Karnphul*, *Dur Bachh*, *Pipal Patti*, *Champakali*, *Mor Bhanwar*, *Bisur*, *Phuli*, *Laung*, *Nath*, *Guluband*, *Har*, *Hans*, *Kangan*, *Gajrah*,

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[1] *Sursagar*, Part I, p. 265, 'तिलक लिलाटे'; p. 619, 'भाल बेंदी'; *Bihari Satsai*, pp. 48-49 'बेंदी भाले'. Bihari refers to different types of *Bindi*, e.g. red, yellow, white, black, pp. 15-17. *Mati Ram Satsai*, p. 448, 'भाल लाल बेंदी', p. 453, 'होत दसगनौ अंक है, दिये एक ज्यों बिंदु'.

[2] *Sursagar*, Part I, p. 265, 'काजर नैन दिये', p. 623, 'अंजन रेखा'; *Rahiman Vilas*, p. 33, 'अंजन चख', also p. 44; *Bihari Satsai*, p. 46, 'अंजन दृगनि'; *Mati Ram Granthavali*, *Ras Raj*, p. 349, 'अंजन नयन'; *Satsai*, p. 476, 'अंजन नयन'; Senapati, *Kavit Ratnakar*, pp. 33, 42, 'अंजन कजरारे नैन'.

[3] Zebunnisa was an exception to it. She neither used *Missi* nor antimony for darkening her eye-lashes. *Dewan of Zebunnisa* by Magan Lal, p. 14.

[4] *Sursagar*, Part II, p. 993, 'बीरा बिहंसि देति अधरन कौ' p. 945, 'अधरनि बारा'; *Bihari Satsai*, p. 49, 'तमोल मुख'; *Mati Ram Granthavali* (Ras Raj), p. 349, 'घिरि अधर'; Senapati, *Kavit Ratnakar*, p. 22, 'बीरै खाइ रही'.

[5] Mannucci, Vol, II, p. 341; *Bihari Satsai*, p. 36 'नहदी मेंहदी'; *Mati Ram Granthavali* (Ras Raj), p. 349, 'मेंहदी पग अरु पानि'; *Satsai*, p. 500, 'करनि में मेंहदी'. Sometimes they also used *Mahavar*, *Bihari Satsai*, p. 46, 'पगन महावर रंग'; *Ram Chandrika*, Part II, p. 207, 'कठिन भूमि अति कौवरे, जावरु भुत शुभ पाय'.

[6] *Padmavat* by Jayasi, with a commentry by Vasudev Saran Agarwal, pp. 287-90.

Jame, *Chur*, *Bahu*, *Churin*, *Bajuband*, *Tad*, *Anguthi*, *Chuddar Kantika*, *Kati Mekhla*, *Jehar Pail*, *Bhank*, *Bichhwa* and *Anwat*.[1]

To begin with, '*Shishphul*' crowned the head.[2] It was called *Rakhari* in Rajputana. It was like marigold, raised, bell-shaped and hollow. The parting of the hair was decorated with *Mang*. Another ornament was *Kotbildar*.[3] It was worn on the forehead. It consisted of strings of pearls with a long centre drop.[4] In Rajputana it was known as *Tika*.

Various other ornaments were used in the ear. Earring, *Karnphul* (shaped like flower of *Magrel*), *Pipal Patti* (crescent-shaped), *Mor Bhanwar* (shaped like a peacock) and *Bali* (circlet) were some of the ornaments used in the ear.[5] The foreign travellers have also referred to the use of ornaments in the ear.[6]

Women also wore ornaments in the nose. They had their nostril pierced and wore rings in them.[7]

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[1] *Ain*, Vol. III, pp. 312-314.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 312.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Manucci writes, "There hangs down from the middle of their head in the centre of their forehead a bunch of pearls of precious stones of the shape of star or sun or moon . . . or flower." Vol. II, pp. 339-40.

[5] *Ain*, Vol. III, pp. 312-14.

[6] Terry says that round about their ears are holes made for pendants. Terry, *Early Travels*, p. 309. Thevenot (1667) writes that they wear a little flat ring in their ears with engraving upon it. Thevenot, p. 53; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 45, says that they adorn ears with pendant or wearing a circle of gold or silver. Hamilton says, "They wear gold or silver rings according to their ability . . . several of small ones in holes bored round the run of the ear with one large and heavy in each lappet." Vol. I, p. 163; *Book of Costume*, p. 415; Forbes, Vol. I, p. 74.

[7] De Laet says that in their pierced nostril they wear gold nose-ring with jems when they desire. De Laet, p. 81; Terry says, "Every woman had one of her nostril pierced . . . where she may wear a ring. Terry, *Early Travels*, p. 309; Thevenot writes that they adorn their nose with rings, p. 53. Careri says, "Many of them bore their noses to wear a gold ring set with stones", p. 248; Hamilton says, "Often they wear gold rings in their nose . . . ", Vol. I, p. 163; Fryer writes that they wear rings on their 'arms, feet . . . nose, ears toes, fingers'. The rich has it of gold and silver while the poor of brass and glass, Vol. II, p. 117; Stavornius, Vol. I, p. 415.

Women wore ornaments on the neck as well. Terry infoms that they bedecked with many jewels about their neck and wrists.[1] *Guluband* was tightly fitted round the neck. It consisted of five or seven rose-shaped buttons of gold-strings or silk. Other forms were necklace, *Har*, *Hansa* and *Kantha*.[2]

Ornaments worn round the arms were sign of good omen. *Bajuband* was worn above the elbow. It was usually two inches wide and inlaid with jewels having small bunches of pearls hanging down. Another ornament was *Toda* which was worn just below the *Bajuband*. *Gajrah* or bracelet was worn on the wrist.[3] Various shapes of *Churis* (bangles) such as *Kara* and *Kangan* were used.[4] Another ornament known as *Pahunchi* was worn in the wrist.[5]

Fingers were decorated with *Anguthi* (ring). On the right thumb *Arsi* (mirror) was worn. It was a ring mounted with a little mirror having pearls round it.[6]

Around the waist they wore *Chuddar Kantika* (belt with small bells) and *Kati Mekhla* or *Kardhani* (waist belt). These were golden belts with decoration.[7]

Payal anklet was commonly used in the feet. It produced jingling sound when the wearer walked. *Bichchwah* (small ring) was used for the toe and *Anwat* (another kind of ring). decorated the big toe.[8]

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[1] Terry, *Early Travels*, p. 309; Manucci also remarks that women wear ornaments on the neck Vol. III, p. 40.

[2] *M.A.*, p. 119. Gitiara Begam received a pearl necklace (Mala) worth Rs. 19000. *Arms and Jewellery of the Indian Mughals* by Abdu Aziz, p. 132.

[3] Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 45.

[4] Tulsidas, *Kavitavali*, p.15; *Arms and Jewellery of the Indian Mughals* by Abdul Aziz, p. 132.

[5] *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 375. Jahangir gave a pair of *Pahunchi* on Nurjahan when she killed four tigers.

[6] "This mirror" writes Manucci, "they use to look at themselves, an act of which they are very fond at any or at every moment", Vol. II, p. 340; Thevenot writes that they wear a great many rings and they have always one with a looking-glass set an inch in diameter, Thevenot, p. 53. Hamilton also says, "The women wear gold rings on their fingers and sometimes one on their thumb, with a small looking-glass set in it." Vol. I, p. 163.

[7] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 314.

[8] Hamilton writes, "They wear also rings on their toes and shekel

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These ornaments were made of gold and silver. They were studded with pretty and precious jewels and stones. Poor women, who could not afford gold or silver, made use of seeds, shells and flowers.[1] Sometimes copper and brass ornaments were also used by them.[2]

The royal ladies were very fond of showing their jewellery to others.[3] They had various kinds of stones and three or four rows of pearls hanging from neck and coming down to the lower part of the stomach. Manucci says that they had big diamonds, rubies, emeralds and six to eight sets of jewels along with other sets.[4] Some of them often designed new patterns themselves.[5]

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on their legs of (gold and silver) metal made hollow and some glass beads loose in them that when they move the legs they make a noise like rattling shake." Vol. I, p. 164; Manucci, Vol. II, p. 340.

[1] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 339-40; *Social Condition of India of Sixteenth and SeventeenthCenturies as Gleaned Through the Vernacular Literature* (Hindi) by Dr. A. P. Mathur (Thesis), p. 136; *Kaumudi*, p. 98.

[2] Fitch, p. 109; Bernier p. 224, describes, "All the troops from the *Omrah* to the man in the ranks will wear silk ornaments nor will a private soldier refuse them to his wife and children though the whole family should die of hunger which indeed is a common occurrence." It is doubtful if people gave more importance to ornaments than bread. Bernier also adds that a large quantity of gold and silver was melted and wasted in making ornaments like bracelets, earrings, rings etc., pp. 223-24. Ornaments were not a waste, they were also a form of saving.

[3] Manucci, Vol. II, pp. 339-40.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Abul Fazl says, "Her Majesty has suggested new patterns in each kind (of ornament)." *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 314.

8

POSITION OF MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASS WOMEN

THE POSITION of women in Indian society underwent many changes as a result of the social changes in the country. The honoured position which the women enjoyed before the advent of Muslims in India gradually deteriorated during the Turkish rule. While the older tradition of high respect for them continued in a section of society,[1] there were some people who looked down upon them and denounced them as the root cause of the ruin of men.[2]

A girl in a Hindu house was taught to respect the members of the family, especially the elders, from her very childhood.

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[1] *The Laws of Manu*, Tr. by Buhler, p. 85 (Shlokas, 55-59).

[2] Kabir Das, *Bijak*, p. 189 writes

'नारी सवल पुरुषहि खायी, ताते रही अकेला' ।

He also says, *Kabir Vachanamrita*, pp. 71-73.

'नारी कुंड नरक का', 'जोरू जूठणि जगत की'

Dadu Dayal, *Dadu Dayal Ki Bani*, Part I, pp. 131-32) says

"नारी वैरणि पुरुष की, पुरिषा वैरी नारि ।
अंति कालि दूल्यूं मुए, कछु न आया हाथ" ॥

Sur Das, *Sur Sagar*, Part II, p. 1187, writes

"भामिनी और भुजंगिनी करी, इनके विषहिं डरैये ।
राचेहुं विरचे सुख नाहीं, भूलित कवहुं पत्यैये ॥
इनके वस मन परै मनोहर, वहुत जतन करि पैये ।
कामी होइ काम आतुर, तिहिं कैसे के समुझैये ॥"

Tulsi Das, *Ram Charitmanas*, p. 778, writes

'डोल गंवार शूद्र पशु नारी, ये सव ताड़न के अधिकारी' ।

She was supposed to worship her husband like God and obey his commands.[1] She was expected to be true to her husband and serve him even in the time of adversity.[2] She was to follow her *pativrata dharma* (complete loyalty and devotion to husband) and lead a very chaste life.[3]

Domestic sphere was the most important field of a woman's activities. She had to do all the household work.[4] In the early morning she used to grind the corn. Then she prepared food and served it herself.[5] She went to fetch water from the well.[6] She would mud-plaster the floor and sweep the house. In leisure she would spin for making garments.[7] Thus her whole day was occupied with the domestic affairs which formed the usual routine.

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[1] Keshav, *Ram Chandrika*, Part I, p.134, writes

"नित पति पंथहि चलिये, दुख सुख का दलु दलिये ।
तन मन सेवहु पति को, तव लहिये सुभ गति को" ॥
'धर्म कर्म सव निरफल देवा, हीह एक फल के पति सेवा' ।

Tulsi Das, *Ram Charitmanas*, pp. 631-32, writes

'एकै धर्म एक व्रत नेमा, काय वचन मन पति पद प्रेमा' ।

[2] Keshav, *Ram Chandrika*, Part I, p. 135, writes

'नारि तजे न अपना सपनेहू भरतार,
पंगु गुंग बौरा वधिर अंध अनाथ अपार' ।

[3] Dadu Dayal, *Dadu Dayal Ki Bani*, p. 95, writes

'पतिव्रता गृह आपने करे खसम की सेव,
ज्यों राखे त्योंही रहे आज्ञाकारी टेव' ।

[4] *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* by Dubois, p. 346; *Travels in the Seventeenth Century* by Roe and Fryer, pp. 117-18.

[5] Reference to her domestic activities are found in folk-lore. For example 'ननदी भउजिया गोंहू पीसे मोरे राम' *Bhojpuri Gram Geet* by K. D. Upadhyaya, p. 132, also pp. 163, 166 and 170. 'रोटी पोवे महलों में राम के रसोइया' p. 216. Bihari, *Bihari Satsai*, Doha 641, p. 255 also writes

"टटकी धोई धोवती, चटकीली मुख ज्योति ।
फिरति रसोई के बगर, जगर मगर दुति होति" ॥

Ghagh and Bhadri, p. 30.

[6] Fitch, *Early Travels*, p. 19; *Maithili Lok Geet* by R. Singh, p. 59.

[7] *Bhojpuri Gram Geet* by K. D. Upadhyaya, p. 150; *Rajasthani Lok Geet* by S. Pareek, p. 75; *Kannauji Lok Geet* by S. Anil, p. 212.

Dowry

The marriage of the girls was sometimes a difficult problem because of the custom of dowry (*Dahej*). It was given at the time of the marriage of the girl by her parents. It consisted of presents like jewels, ornaments, furniture, elephants, horses, maids and other articles of luxury. It was an old custom and gradually it became rigorous. This system was prevalent more among the rich than among the commoners. It also appears that it was absent among the Brahmins.[1] The nature of dowry differed with the economic standards of the parents. The foreign travellers also took notice of the system of dowry prevalent in India.[2]

Usually it was the bridegroom's side which received the dowry. But the reverse cannot be ruled out and in some cases the parents or guardians of the bride also received the dowry. This custom was prevalent mostly among the lower classes in the region comprising today of the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It was particularly followed in cases of aged and moneyed grooms who wanted to marry young girls. In this connection references to the practice of purchasing brides are also found.[3] It appears that the evils of dowry system prevailed with greater rigour in Bengal.[4] There was also a curious custom of giving away a younger sister of the bride to the bridegroom as a part of dowry.[5]

Child Marriage

Child marriage had become a popular feature of the social life in the Mughal period. Girls were generally married before they reached the age of nine or ten years.[1] Both the Hindus and the Muslims had fallen prey to this evil practice. Among the Hindus sometimes daughters were married even before they had learnt to talk.[2] Among the Muslims, daughters were generally married at a very young age.[3]

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[1] *Ain*, Vol. III, p. 339.

[2] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 61; Careri, p. 248; *Bhojpuri Gram Geet Me Karun Ras* by D. P. Singh, p. 368.

[3] Manucci says that it is not uncommon for a husband to buy his wife. In case after the ceremony the groom refused to marry the girl, he lost the money; and if the girl refused, her parents had to return double the amount. Manucci, Vol. III, p. 55.

[4] *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T. C. Das Gupta, p. 4; *History of Bengali Subah* by K. Dutta, p. 71.

[5] *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T. C. Das Gupta, p. 3.

Childbirth

Another noteworthy thing which is observed by the foreign travellers too was that childbirth was taken by the common Indian women very easily. After the birth of the child the very next day the mothers would be found moving about and doing work. If they gave birth to a child on their journey, the next day they would ride on horseback carrying along their child.[4] But this was true only in the case of the poor women of labour class.

Sati

The greatest tragedy in the life of a Hindu woman was the death of her husband. Unlike the Muslims, widow-remarriage was not permitted among the Hindus in the Mughal period except among some lower classes.[5] A widow had to burn herself with the dead body of her husband or had to lead a life of suffering and misery and was treated with contempt by

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[1] *Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 277. Abul Fazl writes: "(Akbar) abhors marriages which take place between men and women before the age of puberty". Fitch, *Early Travels*, pp. 16, 19. Withington, *Early Travels*, p.221. Pelsaert writes: "The Hindus join their children in marriage at the age of only four or five years", Pelsaert, p. 84; *Bhojpuri Gram Geet Me Karun Ras* by D. P. Singh, p. 404; *Maithili Lok Geet*, p. 58.

[2] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 54-59. He also writes that the normal age for the marriage of the daughter of the Brahmins was four or five years, and in some cases, the marriage could be postponed upto ten years of age but never beyond that

[3] Careri particularly refers to Muslims, saying, "The Mohametan Indians marry very young but the idolators at all ages", Careri, p. 248.

[4] Terry, *Early Travels*, p. 309; Purchas, Vol. I, p. 31; Marshal, p. 328; Thevenot, pp. 66, 118: Careri, p. 248.

[5] Badauni, Vol. II (Lowe), p. 367; Thevenot, p. 119; Careri, pp. 256-57. Careri says that the low class Hindus like milkmen, gardeners, washermen, fishermen, etc. allowed their widows to remarry.

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the other members of the family.[1] Society looked down upon the widows who did not perform *Sati*.[2] They were not allowed to grow their hair long or to put on ornaments and good dresses.[3] Widowhood was considered a punishment of the sins of previous lives.[4] The practice of performing *Sati* voluntarily was an ancient custom,[5] but gradually emphasis was laid on becoming *Sati* after the death of her husband even against her wishes.[6] It was mostly performed by the ladies of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Bania community. Almost all the foreign travellers who visited India during the Mughal period mention that women used to burn themselves with the dead body of their husbands.[7] Still there were many ladies who refused to perform it.[8]

Just like *Sati*, *Jauhar* was also performed by ladies particularly in Rajputana. When a Rajput Chief and his soldiers became

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[1] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 60; Thevenot, p. 84.

[2] Bernier, p. 314; Thevenot, p. 84; Stavorinus, Vol. I, pp. 440-41.

[3] Withington, *Early Travels*, p. 219; Manucci, Vol. III, p. 61.

[4] Pietra Della Valle, p. 435; Bernier, p. 314.

[5] Careri, p. 250.

[6] Bernier describes that a young widow of twelve was forcibly asked to perform *Sati*. Bernier, pp. 313-14.

[7] William Fitch (1583-91) refers to *Sati*; "When the husband dies, his wife, if she be alive, is buried with him, if she will not, her hair is shaven and then is never any account made of her after". *Early Travels*, pp. 20, 22) Withington referring to the *Sati* system cites the instance of a girl widow not more than ten years old. *Early Travels*, p. 219. Hawkins, *Early Travels*, p. 119; Purchas, Vol. III, pp. 49-50. De Laet says: "When her husband dies, the widow, of her own free will, leaps upon his pyre and is burnt up together with his corpse, as is a well known fact.", pp. 87-88. Pelsaert observes, "When a Rajput dies, his wives allow themselves to be burnt alive, as is the practice among the Banias and Kshatriya, and in Agra this commonly occurs two or three times a week.", pp. 78-79. Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 84, Vol. II, pp. 273-74. Tavernier, Vol. II, pp. 162-68: Peter Mundy, Vol. II, pp. 24-36; Manucci, Vol. II, p. 97. He also writes that once in the company of his young American friend, he rescued a widow from being burnt and his friend baptised and married her. Vol. III, p. 60; Bernier, pp. 306-15; Thevenot, pp. 72, 119-120; Careri, pp. 249-50, 255.

[8] Pelsaert says, "There are hundreds and even thousands who do not do it." p. 80. Bernier says, "The accounts given of it have been certainly exaggerated, and the number of victims is less now than formerly, the Mahometans by whom the country is governed doing all in their power to suppress the barbarous custom . . ." p. 306.

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sure of their defeat in battle, they either killed their women and children or locked them and set them to fire; thereafter they went to battle-field and gallantly died fighting.[1]

Some of the Mughal Emperors tried to ban this practice. Akbar is said to have issued an order that a woman should not be forced to be a *Sati*.[2] Jahangir is also said to have prohibited *Sati*. It could not be performed without the permission of the King especially in case of young widows.[3] In the year 1663 A.D. Aurangzeb issued an order banning the *Sati* system.[4] Still those widows who did not have children were allowed to perform *Sati* while those who had, were not.[5] In spite of all these efforts *Sati* could not be altogether suppressed under the Mughals.

Parda

Parda was observed mainly by the Muslim ladies and was not so rigid with the Hindu ladies.[6] The practice of strict veiling was common among the Mohammedans. With the advent of Turks in India it was also adopted by the Hindu women as a protective measure to save their honour at the hands of the foreign invaders. It appears that the tendency to imitate the ruling class also gave impetus to the *parda* system. Abundant references of the observance of *Parda* are found in the accounts of contemporary foreign travellers.[1] *Parda* was mainly confined to the rich and well-to-do classes.[2] Poor women, especially in villages, worked in fields and could not afford to observe *Parda*.[3]

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[1] Abul Fazl refers to this fatal custom performed by the Rajputs of Chittor on its fall, "For it is an Indian custom that when such a calamity has occurred a pile is made of sandalwood, aloes etc., as large as possible and to add to this dry firewood and oil. Then they leave hard-hearted confidants incharge of their women. As soon as it is certain that there has been a defeat and that the men have been killed these stubborn ones reduce the innocent women to ashes." *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. II, p. 472; *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* by Tod, Vol. I, pp. 363, 381, Vol. II, pp. 744-46.

[2] Badauni says, "If a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with her husband, they should not prevent her, but she should not be forced against her will." Badauni, Vol. II, p. 388.

[3] Withington, *Early Travels*, p. 219; but this order was not always carried and Jahangir could not succeed in preventing *Sati* at Agra. Hawkins. *Early Travels*, p. 119.

[4] Manucci says, "(Aurangzeb) issued an order that in all lands under the Mughal control never again should the officials allow a woman to be burnt." Manucci, Vol. II, p. 97; Thevenot, p. 120; Careri, p. 250.

[5] Manucci says that the principal wife of a Rajput Raja who had sons, was not allowed to perform *Sati* in order to maintain the family line. Manucci, Vol. III, p. 156; Careri, p. 255; Tavernier, Vol. II, pp. 210-16.

[6] De Laet, p. 81; Manucci, Vol. I, p. 62; Fryer, p. 181.

Property Rights Enjoyed by the Women

Some of the ladies held *Zamindaris* (villages), *Milkiyat*-rights, and lands. They had the liberty of inheriting, selling and disposing of their properties.[4] A lady named Sabhanu, who was the sister of one Mahan Singh sold her village Debidaspur in about 1681 A.D.[5] Another lady named Bhikan was the owner

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[1] De Laet writes, "The Mohammedan women do not come out into public unless they are poor or immodest; they veil their heads . . . " p. 80; Pietra Della Valle says, "For these (Muslim ladies) unless they be dishonest or poor never come abroad." Vol. I, pp. 44-45. He further says that the Mohammedans would not allow their wives to talk even to their relatives, except in their presence. p. 430; Also see Tavernier, p. 181. Manucci writes,"Among the Mohammedans it was a great dishonour for a family when a wife is compelled to uncover herself." Vol. II, p. 175, also Vol. I, p. 62. Thevenot writes, "If these Indian women be idolators they go bare-faced and if Mohametans, they are veiled." p. 53. Careri observes, "The Mohametan women do not appear in public except only the vulgar sort and lewd ones. They cover their heads . . ." p. 248. Hamilton writes, "The Mohammedan women always go veiled when they appear abroad". Vol. I, p. 163; Fryer, Vol. II, pp. 117-18. Barbosa says that every Mohammedan has three or four wives. They keep them carefully shut up. Barbosa, Vol. II, p. 147. Bowry wrote that the Bengalies did not allow their wives and concubines to go abroad but kept them under eunuchs' care. Bowry, p. 207; *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir* by T. Raychaudhuri, p. 206. Even Badauni refers to it, "And if a young woman were found running about the lanes and bazars of the town and while so doing either did not veil herself or allowed herself to be in veil . . . she was to go to the quarters of the prostitutes and take up the profession." Badauni, Vol. II, p. 405.

[2] Bernier, p. 413; Pietra Della Valle, p. 461; *Society and Culture in Mughal Age* by P.N. Chopra, p. 104.

[3] De Laet, p. 81.

[4] *Agrarian System in Mughal India* by Dr. Irfan Habib, p. 155.

[5] U.P. Records Office, Allahabad. Accession Register of the U.P.

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(proprietress) of two villages, Baidaura and Baidauri in the year 1672 A.D.[1] Other similar references are also found in various contemporary records.[2]

Many farmans issued during this period confirm the possession of lands, gardens and *sarais* by women. Inayatullah Vakil, on behalf of his wife Bibi Rakhi, sold a plot of land to Mir Ghulam Haider.[3] Bibi Sukhi sold a plot of land outside the *Qila* in Kol for two hundred rupees. The transcription on her behalf was done by Abdur Razzaqq.[4] Sheikh Sadullah, on behalf of his mother Bibi Saba sold a garden of five *biswa* for rupees one hundred and one to Sheikh Mohammad Yusuf of Kol.[5] Abdul Razzaq, on behalf of his mother Sakhi, sold a *sarai* for two hundred rupees.[6]

Some women also received grants of lands in form of *Madad-i-Maash*.[7] Seventy *bighas* of land was measured by *Ilahi* yard in pargana Kol and was given to Khatoon as *Madad-i-Maash* in the forty first regnal year of Aurangzeb.[8] Again forty five *biswas* of land was conferred on Maham in the same pargana.[9] Achhi Bibi possessed eighteen *bighas* of *Pukhta* land as *Madad-i-Maash* (1739 A.D.).[10] During the reign of Farrukhsiyar eighty five

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Records Inquiry Committee Records. Nos. 1215 and 1216, as quoted in *Agrarian System in Mughal India*, by Dr. Irfan Habib, p. 155.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Farman* No. 2 (1737 A.D.) in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University. It is a Sale Deed.

[4] *Farman* No. 22, in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University.

[5] *Farman* Nos. 49, 57 in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University.

[6] *Ibid.*, No. 15.

[7] *Madad-i-Maash* was an act of charity. They were given to the learned, religious or destitute persons who had no capacity to work, and also to persons of noble lineage. Women also received it. *Ain*, Vol. I, pp. 198-99. Abul Fazl says Turani and Irani women held grants. A special sister of Jahangir's father was in charge of grants to women *Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 46. *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 158, refers to two categories of lands, held by women, called (Chakhai-Musammati) and held by men, Muzakkarati as quoted in *Agrarian System in Mughal India* by Dr. Irfan Habib, p. 707.

[8] *Farman* No. 212 in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University.

[9] *Ibid.*, Nos. 213 & 220.

[10] *Ibid.*, No. 176 (1739 A.D.).

bighas of land in pargana Kol was confirmed as *Madad-i-Maash* to a lady named Aisha.[1] Two *bighas* of land in pargana Jalali was confirmed as *Madad-i-Maash* on another lady named Shah Bibi.[2] Many such references are found in the Mughal farmans which bear out that women used to hold land in form of *Madad-i-Maash*.[3]

Religion

Religion was predominant in the lives of the ladies whether they were Hindus or Muslims. A Hindu lady kept various fasts, visited temples, and read religious books, while a Muslim woman similarly read Quran, offered prayers called *Namaz* and also kept fasts. Both celebrated their religious festivals with great enthusiasm.

There were some women who devoted themselves wholly to religion and became saints or mystics. Bibi Fatima Saiman, the sister of Sheikh Fariduddin, and Bibi Zulekha, the mother of Nizamuddin Aulia, were among them.[4] Another lady named Bibi Nauni, who used to sell tobacco, later on attained the highest degree of mysticism.[5] Mata Sundari, a lady in the harem of Guru Govind Singh, established a monastery of her own and many Sikhs came to join her monastery.[6]

Thus it appears that women also took to asceticism and sometimes became *Joginis* (lady ascetics).[7]

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[1] *Farman* No. 195 in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University.

[2] *Farman* No. 196 in the Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University.

[3] *Ibid.*, Nos. 198, 201, 205, 207, 209, 216-221, 223-225, 238, 246 and 255.

[4] *Chahar Gulshan* by Chattarman Kayatha, f. 28a.

[5] Once Shah Naga, a saint, passed in front of her shop. She gave him some tobacco. When he left the shop Bibi Nauni felt a peculiar sensation. She followed the Sufi and reached his monastery. The Sufi got very angry and asked her to go away, but she did not leave the place and, after some days, she obtained mystic light and attained highest degree of mysticism. *Chahar Gulshan* by Chattarman Kayatha, ff. 36b, 37a.

[6] *Ibid.*, f. 150a.

[7] There is a painting which shows a Yogini in the company of the Court ladies. *The Art and Architecture of Bikaner State* by Herman Goetz, p. 172.

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Education

As regards the education of common women, girls belonging to middle-class family did not receive much education. Some of them visited schools, run in private houses by some elderly ladies.[1] Sometimes the father of the girl also acted as her teacher.[2] Girls of the poor family were almost left illiterate except a few who were collected and sometimes given instructions by the Mullas of the mosque[3] or by some Pandits in *Pathshalas*.[4] The subject of studies were mainly domestic-science such as needle work, embroidery, cooking and household work.[5]

On the whole, the education of common women was not widespread. There were no regular and separate schools for them. Boys and girls in the early years studied together, but even that seems doubtful due to the strict *parda* system prevalent in those days.[6] Moreover, their studies were hampered due to the practice of early marriages.[7]

Literary Activities

During the Mughal period though the education of the common women was ignored, yet there were many ladies who took keen interest in literary activities. They were not only the inspiration of the poets of that period but they also enriched the contemporary literature by their own works.

A close examination of the contemporary Hindi literature reveals that the contribution of ladies is fairly rich, qualitatively

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Another painting depicts a woman ascetic, sitting with her companion, and a lady is offering something to her with folded hands. The woman ascetic is wearing a *pagri* and is sitting on a loin-cloth with a rosary in her hands. Stchoukine, Plate no. lx.

[1] *The Educational System in Medieval India* by Yusuf Husain (Islamic Culture Vol. XXX, 1956) p. 122; *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* by Yusuf Husain, p. 93; Jafar, p. 8.

[2] Sarkar, *Studies*, pp. 301-2.

[3] *Ibid.*, Jafar, p. 8.

[4] *Some Aspects of Northern Indian Social Life* by P. N. Ojha, p. 110.

[5] Manucci, Vol. III, p. 55; *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* by Tod, Vol. II, p. 712.

[6] Law, p. 200.

[7] Sarkar, *Studies*, p. 301.

as well as quantitatively. For the sake of convenience the women writers of the Mughal period can be divided into three major groups—those who were influenced by Bhakti Movement and composed verses devoted to Rama or Krishna; those who were influenced by the contemporary *Reeti kavya* devoted to rhetorics and prosody and the physical beauty of women; and finally those who composed verses on various diverse subjects. However, most of them derived their inspiration from religion and composed verses devoted to their favourite form of God.

SAINT POETESSES

The *Nirgun* aspect of *Bhakti* (devotion) also influenced a number of poetesses. The subjects which they usually dealt with were the importance of teacher *(Guru)*, praises of renowned saints, importance of knowledge etc. They excelled in expressing their emotions and feelings, but usually wrote didactic poetry.

Among the saint poetesses, the earliest reference is found of Indra Mati, the wife of Pran Nath who flourished in the sixteenth century and composed some *Dohas* in 1549 A.D.[1]

During the reign of Akbar a number of saint poetesses flourished. Ganga and Jamuna, the two disciples of Hit Ji, belong to this period. Others of the same school were Kalmashi Devi, Rani Rar Dhari and Navla Devi[2] but the details about them are not available.

The tradition continued even afterwards and some of them flourished in the eighteenth century. Among them, mention may be made of Daya Bai, the disciple of Charan Das. She composed her poems about the middle of the eighteenth century. Two of her works which are available today are ‘Daya Bodh’ and ‘Vinaya Malika.”[3] A contemporary of Daya Bai was Sahjo Bai who was also a disciple of Charan Das. One of her works, known as ‘Sahaj Prakash’, is available, in which she has written about the importance of a good teacher and the qualities of a saint.[4]

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[1] Sinha, p. 83.

[2] *Sahitya Prakash* by Rasal, p. 109.

[3] Sinha, p. 67.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

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POETESSES OF KRISHNAIT SCHOOL

Sagun Bhakti had two streams—the Krishnait school and the Ramait School. Lord Krishna attracted a number of female devotees, some of whom composed exquisite verses in praise of their Lord. Mira Bai, who flourished in early sixteenth century, is the most prominent among them. She was married to Kumbha, the ruler of Udaipur.[1] Mira was a great devotee of Lord Krishna and composed many poems in His praise. Various works of Mira such as 'Narsi Ji Ka Mahra', 'Gita Govinda Ki Tika' 'Rag Govinda'' 'Garva Geet'' 'Sphuta Pad' and 'Meera Ke Pad' are found even today.[2] Her verses are plain, simple and often set to music. They are composed in Rajasthani, Braj and Gujrati languages.

Another poetess of this school was Bavri Saheb, who was a contemporary of Akbar. She was the disciple of Bhayanand and due to her excessive love for God, she was known as Bavri (meaning mad). She wrote many *padas* and had a good command of Hindi and Urdu.[3]

A third poetess of Krishnait School was Ganga Bai. She lived in Mahavan (near Mathura) and was a disciple of Vitthal Das.[4] Not much is known about her life. She worshipped the child form of Krishna. She wrote an independent work known as 'Ganga Bai ke pad'. Some of her *padas* are also found in the collection of the works of *Pushtimarg* saints.

Son Kumari who flourished in the latter half of sixteenth century also belongs to this group. She was a princess of Amber family. She composed a work known as 'Swarn Beli Ki Kavita.'[5]

One of the most famous poetesses of this period was Taj who wrote in seventeenth century. Details of her life are not available. She lived in village Karoli.[6] Though she was a Muhammedan, yet she worshipped Krishna. She wrote many verses in Braj *bhasha*. From the point of view of art she stands next to Meera Bai.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 105.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp.131-32.

[3] *Hindi Sahitya* by Dwivedi, p. 140.

[4] Sinha, p. 158.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Thus in Krishnait School a good number of poetesses flourished. The main theme of their works was devotion to Lord Krishna in various forms. From the point of view of art, they were quite successful and some of them such as Meera Bai and Taj achieved high distinction.

POETESSES OF RAMAIT SCHOOL

In the Ramait school of poetry, reference to only one poetess is found. It appears that this school was not so popular as the Krishnait school in which there was full freedom for the expression of feelings. Rama was idolized (as *Maryada Purushottam*) and so there was to be maintained some restraint in expression.

The only poetess of this school whose reference is available is Madhur Ali who wrote in the latter half of the sixteenth century. She lived in Orchha at a time when the Kingdom was ruled by Madhukar Shah.[2] It is quite surprising that in an atmosphere of feudal grandeur Madhur Ali preferred devotion to *Shringar*. Amongst her works are '*Ram Charit*' and '*Ganesh Dev Leela*', but none of them are available.

During the sixteenth century, in Bengal also flourished a poetess named Chandravati. She was the daughter of famous poet Bamsidas. She composed a Ramayan which is noted for its originality and poetic beauty.[3]

POETESSES OF REETI KAVYA

During the Mughal period there developed in Hindi poetry a tendency to emphasize the technique of poetry and to describe in vivid detail the physical beauty of women; the followers of this school were known the *Reeti* poets. Some ladies also were attracted to it—particularly to the second aspect of it which is known as *Shringar* poetry—and those worth mentioning are Praveen Rai Patur, Rup Mati, Teen Tarang and Rangarejin.

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[1] Sinha, p. 192.

[2] *Ibid.*, p, 222.

[3] *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T.C. Das Gupta, p. 201.

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They all flourished in the latter half of sixteenth and the first half of seventeenth centuries.

Praveen Rai Patur was a singer and dancer by profession. She developed her art in the court of Raja Indrajeet, the king of Orchha, who was her patron and was himself an expert in music.[1] It is said that Rai Praveen used to sing her own compositions. The complete collection of her verses are not available but whatever scattered verses are available, they are sufficient to prove her genius and her originality of expression.[2]

Another poetess of this school was Rup Mati who was the daughter of a prostitute of Sarangpur near Ujjain. No detailed information is available about her.[3]

A third poetess, named Teen Tarang also belonged to this group. She carried on her devotion to the art of poetry under the patronage of Raja Madhukar Shah of Orchha.[4]

The last of them was Sheikh Rangrejin. She was born in a Muslim family and was a dyer by caste.[5] She used to earn her livelihood by dyeing clothes. It appears that she had free access to the Mughal Court and often visited the court of Prince Muazzam.[6] She was, later on, married to Alam, and both, hushand and wife, composed verses. Their verses are mostly in Braj *bhasha* with an admixture of Arabic and Persian words.[7] Her poems are compiled in a book known as '*Alam Keli*' which is a good example of *Shringar Ras*.[8]

POETESSES OF DIVERSE SUBJECTS

Besides this, there was another group of poetesses who composed verses on diverse subjects such as morals, duty of women, devotion to husband etc. The first amongst them is Ratnavali, the wife of famous saint-poet Tulsi Das. She composed many couplets.[9]

[1] Sinha, pp. 239-40.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

[4] *Kok Shashtra Granth* is said to have been written by her. See Sinha, p. 252.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Sinha, p. 254.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

Another poetess was Khaganiya who flourished in seventeenth century. She was born in a village near Unnao. She composed many riddles called *Pahelis* which are very popular.[1]

A third poetess, about whom scanty information is available, was the daughter-in-law of Keshava Das, the famous Hindi poet of the seventeenth century. She is said to have composed some verses in a meter known *Savaiyya*.[2]

Finally one more lady who also composed some verses was Kavi Rani Chaube, the wife of Lok Nath Chaube, who was in the court of Budh Singh, the king of Bundi. The period of her compositions is towards the close of the seventeenth century.[3]

In addition to above there were some ladies in Rajasthan who composed verses in *Dingal*. The poetesses of *Dingal* resided in the palaces where they served the queens and entertained them.[4] One among them was Champa De Rani. She was married to Prithviraj, the brother of the King of Bikaner, who also used to compose verses. She assisted her husband in composing verses. Her works are not available.[5] Her period of composition is towards the close of the sixteenth century.

Another poetess of *Dingal* was Padma Charini[6] who also flourished during the same period. She was the daughter of Charan Mal Ji Sahu and the wife of Bharat Shankar. She served in the palace of Bikaner to earn her livelihood.[7]

A third poetess named Kak Rechi Ji also belonged to this group. She flourished during the reign of Shahjahan. She was the daughter of Thakur Baghela Aggra Ji and was married to Nahar Narhar Das of Marwar. Her husband died in a war during the reign of Shahjahan.[8]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[2] Sinha, p. 288.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

[6] Sinha, pp. 30-31.

[7] It is said that once while Amar Singh, the King of Bikaner, was asleep, Akbar invaded his palace. No one dared to wake him up and (finally) Padma woke him up by her songs. Sinha, p. 31.

[8] Sinha, p. 35. It is said that her father-in-law, husband and sons served under Shahjahan.

A poetess named Nathi, who was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, also composed some good verses. She flourished in the reign of Aurangzeb.[1]

All these poetesses of *Dingal* composed verses, devotional *padas* and *dohas*. *Shringar Ras* predominates their verses. From the literary point of view their poems cannot be rated very highly.[2]

On the whole, the attempt made by the ladies in the sphere of Hindi literature is praiseworthy. In those circumstances it is fairly creditable that they tried their best to touch every branch of literature except the *Prem Margi* school in which no poetess contributed anything. Not only from the point of view of subject matter, but also in matter of art, some of them like Sahjo Bai, Daya Bai, Ganga Bai, Sheikh Rangrejin and Praveen Rai are remarkable and their contributions in this field can hardly be ignored.

WOMEN AND SANSKRIT LEARNING

In Sanskrit the interest of ladies was gradually declining. It seems that the education of Sanskrit was limited to certain classes and women were not especially encouraged to it. Consequently, they did not attain much proficiency in it. Even then, in Southern India the tradition of women taking to Sanskrit learning continued to some extent. There seems to be certain reasons for it. First, there was the rise of regional languages which was welcomed by the ladies. They had facilities for learning them and found it convenient and easier to express themselves through these languages rather than through Sanskrit. Secondly, there was the lack of proper Sanskrit education without which the ladies could not excel in this sphere. Finally, it was the impact of Persian language (which was also the court language during this period) that Sanskrit was not given so much importance. Naturally, the ladies could not attain much proficiency in it.

Reference is found of one Sanskrit poetess who flourished during this period. She was Priyamvada, the daughter of

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[1] Sinha, p. 34. it is guessed that she was the daughter of Bhoj Raj. No definite information about her life is found.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Shiva Ram, and the wife of Raghunath. She lived in Faridpur (in 1600 A.D.) in East Bengal. She wrote the famous poem 'Shyama Rahasya' and her earliest verse is written in praise of Krishna.[1]

Dress

The dress of common women among the Muslims consisted of a shirt and a trouser.[2] The shape of their trousers varied. Some wore *Shalwar* (breaches) and others *Ghagra* (loose skirt).[3] Some ladies of rich families used Kashmiri shawls and *Qabas*.[4] While going out, the ladies covered their head with veil.[5] The dress of Muslim ladies is often described by foreign travellers.[6]

Hindu women generally wore *Choli* which was a small jacket worn round the chest.[7] Below it they wore *Sari*.[8]

Reference of *Sari* frequently occurs in Hindi literature.[9]

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[1] *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* by M. Krishnamachari, p. 394.

[2] Pietra Della Valle, p. 411.

[3] Shalwar and *Ghagra* were worn below the shirt. The former was tight and plated from above while the latter though plated from above was loose at the end.

[4] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 341.

[5] De Laet, p. 81; Terry, *Early Travels*, p. 309; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, pp. 44-45; Thevenot, p. 53; Hamilton, Vol. I, p. 163; Fryer, Vol. II, pp. 117-18.

[6] Hamilton, who visited India from 1688 to 1723, writes about the garments of women "Their garments differ but little from the man's. Their coats which also serve both sexes for shirts are close-bodied. The man's are gathered in pleats below the navel and the women's are gathered a pretty way above to make their waist seem short. They both wear breaches to the ankles. "Hamilton, Vol. I, p. 163; *Book of Costume*, p. 415; Forbes, Vol. I, p. 94.

[7] *Ain.*, Vol. III, p. 343.

[8] Babur described *Sari* "as cloth one end of which goes round the waist the other is thrown over the head". *B.N.* (Bev.), Vol. I, p. 519.

Tavernier writes, "The dress of women is simple cloth making five or six turns like petticoat from the waist downward as if they had three or four rounds above the other." Tavernier, Vol. II, p. 42.

Thevenot, p. 37; Forbes, Vol. I, p. 74; Stavorinus, Vol. I, p. 415; *Indian Costumes* by G.S. Ghurye, pp. 140-41; *Catalogue of Indian Collection*, Plate li, *Book of Costume*, pp. 414-15.

[9] *Padmavat* of Jayasi p. 176; *Sursagar*, Part I, p. 265; *Raskhan Granthavali*, p. 62 ; *Bihari Satsai* p. 43, Doha 121, p. 46, Doha 127 (blue Sari), p. 57, *Doha* 131, p. 48, *Doha* 132 (white *sari*), *Mati Ram Satsai*, pp. 452-493.

Hindu women were mostly fond of red colour.[1] Manucci, while describing the dress of Hindu girls, writes that upto the age of nine or ten the Hindu girls wear the same clothes as the boys. "After that time they wear a piece of white or red cotton cloth that thay bind on like a petticoat. Sometimes the pane (*Punjam*)[2]—for so they call this cloth—is striped in two colours. One half of the said pane (*Punjam*) is thrown over the shoulders or the head when speaking to a person of any position, but when they go to the well or a spring to fetch water, and when at work in their houses, they keep the whole pane (*Punjam*) bound round the waist, and thence upwards are naked."[3]

The costume of Bengali women was of a bit different pattern. They used *Saris* made of fine fabric.[4] *Saris* were of varied patterns—for example *Mayur pankhi*, *Magh damber*, *Pater Bhuni*, *Nilambari*, *Ganga-jali* etc. They also wore *Kanchuki* (blouse).[5] The *Kanchukis* were of two types—one used to be short, covering only the breast and the other used to be long, reaching down to the waist. It was fastened at the back with ribbons. The *Kanchuk* was decorated with fine and artistic embroidery. They also used an underwear resembling a petticoat. In aristocratic families *Ghaghra* was used.[6]

The popular dress of Rajput ladies was *Lahanga* and *Choli*. *Lahanga* was a long and loose skirt and *Choli* or *Angiya* (blouse) was worn on the upper portion. A *Dupatta* or long scarf was thrown over to cover the head and upper part of the body.[7]

As regards their dress, the Sikh women wore trousers called

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[1] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 341; Pietra Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 45. Printed cloth was also used by them.

[2] In Northern India it is called *Sari*. Manucci, Vol. II, p. 40 (Footnote).

[3] Manucci, Vol. II, p. 40.

[4] *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T. C. Das Gupta, Introduction, p. xxvii and pp. 46, 228, 270.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. xxvii, and 42, 288-89; Stavorinus writes "They support their breast and press them upwards by a piece of linen which passes under the arms and made fast on the back." Vol. I, p. 415.

[6] *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T.C. Das Gupta, p. xxvii.

[7] *Ain.*, Vol. III, p. 342. *History of Rajputana* by J.S. Gahlot, Vol. I, p. 105; *History of Rajputana* by Ojha, Vol. I, p. 19.

Suthan.[1] It was made of *Susi*, a type of coloured cotton cloth. Many women wore a *kurta* and waistcoat.[2] A *chadar* was worn over the head and shoulder. It used to be either coloured (in case of young women) or uncoloured. It was made of *Garha* (coarse cloth) or *Dhotar* which used to be thick in winter and thin in summer. Sometimes it was a dyed cloth and often it was worked with silk flowers, (*phulkari sitari*).[3] Sometimes they also wore *Ghagra*, *Choli* and *Saris*.[4] The clothes for daily use were made from the home-spun material which, though rough, was strong and durable.[5] The ordinary dyes were indigo for blue and saffron flower for red and yellow.

About the dress of Gujrati women, Durate Barbosa, who visited India in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, says "Their dress is as long as that of their husbands. They wear silken bodices with tight sleeves, cut low at the back and other long garments called Chandes (*chadar*) which they throw over themselves like cloaks when they go out."[6]

The women of Kashmir wore an effiminate gown[7] or long tunic coming down to the feet. They did not use drawers. Waist-band was used by both the sexes. The Hindu ladies wore dresses of dark maroon or blue colour and fastened a girdle of white cloth round their waist.[8] The Muslim women in Kashmir wore no girdle and their tunic was richly embroidered.[9] Besides this, the women had a fillet on the forehead and above it was a mantilla (long gown) which fell from the head over the shoulders to the legs.[10] The head-dress of Muslim women was called

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[1] *History of the Sikhs* by H.R. Gupta, p. 291; *The Punjab Being a Brief Account* by Col. Steinbach, p. 112.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[3] *History of the Sikhs* by H.R. Gupta, p. 291.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 291; *Punjab Under the Mughals* by Muhammad Akbar, p. 258.

[5] *History of the Sikhs* by H.R. Gupta, p. 291.

[6] *Book of Durate Barbosa* by Mansel Longworth Dames, Vol. I, pp. 113-14; *Indian Costume* by Ghurye, pp. 143-44.

[7] *The Valley of Kashmir* by W.R. Lawrence, p. 251.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 252; *Kashmir from Shahmir to Shahjahan* by Dr. R.K. Parmu (Thesis), p. 323.

[9] *The Valley of Kashmir* by W.R. Lawrence, p. 252.

[10] *Kashmir Under the Sultans* by Mohibul Hasan, p. 229.

Qasaba and of Hindu women called *Tarange* which was tied to a hanging bonnet falling to the heels from behind.[1]

Ornaments

The names of the ornaments used by the common women among the Hindus and the Muslims were the same as worn by the ladies of the Mughal aristocracy. The main difference between their ornaments was that of material and sometimes of pattern or name.[2] The common women instead of gold, silver and precious jewels, used copper, tin, glass and ivory.[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 229; *The Valley of Kashmir* by W.R. Lawrence, p. 251.

[2] In Bengal the names of these ornaments were different. The head ornament was known there as *Sinthi* and that of nose was called *Besar* or *Nakh Chhabi*. The names of ornaments worn in the ear was *Kundal, Kanbala, Hiraman-Salkadi, Madan Kadi*; in neck were *Sateswari. Gribapatra;* in arms *Tad, Angada, Ananta, Keyur, Maduli, Ratanchud* and in toes *Unchchat* and *Ujjhatika*. *Aspects of Bengali Society* by T.C. Das Gupta, pp. 51-56; *Bengal in the sixteenth Century* by J.N. Das Gupta, p. 184.

[3] Fitch, *Early Travels*, p. 13; Ralph Fitch, *England's Pioneer to India and Burma* Vol. I, p. 128, Part II, p. 107.

APPENDIX - 'A'

Farmans of Nurjahan

(FARMAN NO. I)*

God is Great

Jahangir

(Nurjahan)

Seal of Nurjahan—(in the form of couplet).

> "By the light of the sun (or love) of Jahangir—and the divine grace the signet of Nurjahan has illuminated the world alike moon."

The chosen of the peers, worthy of favours and obligation Raja Surat Singh, hoping for the sublime favours, should know that a sum of money, according to the bonds, is due to Kishan Dass and Baroman his son, the treasurer of Her Majesty, and keeps it (the sum) with his uncle Sultan Rathore.

If so, as the aforesaid Rathore is in his (Surat Singh's) service he (Surat Singh) is ordered to pay off the said debts (which the said Rathore owes, according to the legal bonds, to the said Kishan Dass and Baroman), from his own estate, to their (Kishan Dass and Baroman's) peoples (relatives and to deduct the same from his (Rathore's) salary (lit. substance money).

He should not disobey the orders and should regard it as his duty.

D/ 10th Azar Elahi . . . 12
December, 1617

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* *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans Addressed by Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, p. 38.

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(FARMAN NO. II)*

God is Great

Seal of Nurjahan.

Ganga Bai, being hopeful for the exalted favours, should know, that it has just now reached our eminent notice, that the village of Oodey Singh, son of Raja Dalpat Singh, being attacked, Haya and Mohan have been done to death, and their relatives been confined. An attestation (signed by a body of people), sealed by Hashim, the wearied messenger and Mohammed Naqi, has been delivered to (our) Court. Such matters are very bad and undesirable.

Therefore, she should, on being informed of the contents of this Majestic order, take them out of the confinement, send (them) to the Court, and should not hereafter attempt to go near that village.

She should not evade this order and should regard it her duty.

D/ 2nd Shaharyur . . . 14.
August, 1619.

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* *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans Addressed by Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, p. 39.

(FARMAN NO. III)*

Jahangir

Nurjahan

Seal of Nurjahan—God is Great: With the light of the sun (or love) of Jahangir, the ruler of the world, the signet of Nurjahan Badshah became illuminated.

The Commissioner of Raja Suraj Singh, the pick of his equals, should know, that whereas, an exalted mandate has been issued in his name, from the sublime Court, he should therefore, act in accordance with its contents, be too cautious and careful to evade it. He should be hoping for the royal favours and exalted condescensions in proportion to his service, devotion and sincerity.

He should not oppose or evade this order.

D/ 11th Aban . . . 31.
October, 1626.

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* *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans Addressed by Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, p. 65.

APPENDIX—'B'

The following Nishans of Nurjahan are preserved in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.*

Year	*Class of Correspondence*	*Name of the Writer*	*Name of addressee*	*Subject*
August 1622	Nishan	Empress Nurjahan	Raja Jai Singh	Desiring him to send the money of the lease of Amer per Mohd. Hashim.
November 1664	,,	,,	,,	Expressing pleasure on his (Raja's) disassociation with Mahabat Khan, desires him now to act according to the wishes of Khan-i-Jahan.
November 1625	,,	,,	,,	Desiring him to act according to the orders conveyed to him through Fidai Khan.
December 1625	,,	,,	,,	Sending a Khilat per Khwaja Roz Bihan.
October 1626	,,	,,	,,	Desiring the Raja to report every thing to the Royal Court and not to act against the Royal Orders.

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* *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs, and Nishans Addressed, by the Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, p. 28.

APPENDIX—'C'

Following Nishans of Jahanara Begam are preserved in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.*

Year	*Class of correspondence*	*Name of the writer*	*Name of addressee*	*Subject*
July 1640	Nishan	Princess Jahanara	Raja Jai Singh	Desiring the Maharaja to identify that Hem Singh is the real son of Raja Satra Sal and report it to Sultan Nisar Begam so that he may be rewarded with a khilat and mansab.
September 1651	,,	Begam Sahiba	,,	Appreciating his services in expelling the violators of peace from Kaman and Pahari and populating them with the Rajputs, informs that a farman has been issued to him directing him to attend the Royal Court with a view to proceed on an expedition to Kandhar.
Undated	,,	Begam Sahiba	,,	Assuring him (Raja) of many Royal favours.

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* *A Descriptive List of Farmans, Manshurs and Nishans Addressed by Imperial Mughals to the Princes of Rajasthan*, pp. 30 & 32.

APPENDIX—'D'

*Farman of Hamideh Banu Begam**

He is Great.

Hamideh Banu, daughter of Ali Akbar.

Order of Hamideh Banu Begam.

May it be known to the Karori and diligent officer and others of the Paraganah of Mahaban in the Sarkar of the Great Seat (capital) of the Empire Agra, that according to the Farman of the exalted and the just (Emperor) the cows belonging to the indisputable prayer-offerer (well-wisher) Vithalesharai, wearer of the sacred thread (Brahmin) may graze, wherever they are and not a single individual out of the Khalsa or Jagir (land-holders) should molest them or prevent them (from grazing). They must permit his cows to graze (wherever they are). The above-mentioned (Vithalrai) should, therefore, remain easy at heart. It is incumbent (on all) that they must act according to the order and carry it out, and they should not act contrary to and against it (should not deviate from it). Written on the 10th day of Ramzan at Mubarak A. H. 989, Sunday (8th October A. D. 1581 (O.S.) Samvat year 1638.

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* *Imperial Farmans*, Tr. by K.M. Jhaveri, No. III.

APPENDIX—'E'

*Farman of Maryam-uz-Zamani, the mother of Emperor Jahangir.**

(TRANSLATION)

"God is Great.

Seal—Wali Nimat Begam, mother of the King Nuruddin Jahangir.

Unwan—The order of Maryam Zamani . . . . the asylum of dignity and perfect wisdom . . . . chieftainship, worthy of kindness and beneficence . . . . should be expectant of favour and know that whereas Mudabbir Beg, one of the slaves and well-wishers of this court . . . . , has represented that the fiscal authorities have granted him a Jagir at the pargana of Chaupala in Sarkar Sambhal in lieu of his pay but its assets have not been realised by his agents and Suraj Mal Zamindar embezzles and usurps them. (It is hereby ordered) that on learning the contents of the farman of Her Exalted Highness, he should summon the ryot before him and making enquiry into the matter get all the dues, the present revenue, and arrears, paid to the aforesaid Mudabbir Beg and he should not permit Suraj Mal to embezzle or usurp a single Fallus or Jital.[1] Considering this imperative, he should bring the order to execution and do nothing contrary to it . . . . on the date . . . . the month of tir of Ilahi year . . . . "

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* Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings of Meetings, Vol. VIII, 1925, p. 169.

[1] Fallus and Jital were copper coins.

APPENDIX—'F'

List of the Rajput Ladies in the Mughal Harem

Name of the Lady	*Relationship*	*Sources*
1. Name not given	Daughter of Raja Bhar Mal and sister of Bhagwan Das. Married To Akbar in 1562 A.D.	*Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 309.
2. Jodh Bai, enjoyed the title of *Maryam-uz-Zamani*, Name not mentioned by any Muhammedan historian.	Her relationship is subject to controversy*	*Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 309.
3. Man Bai, received title of Shah Begam.	Daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das. Married to Jahangir in 1585 A.D.	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 15, 55-56; *A.N.* (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 677-78; *Tabqat*, Vol. II, p. 599; Badauni, Vol. II, p. 352.
4. Name not given	Daughter of Rai Rai Singh, son of Rai Kalyan Mal of Bikaner. Married to Jahangir, 1586 A.D.	Not mentioned in *Tuzuk*; *Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 310, *A.N.*, (Bev.), Vol. III, pp. 748-49; *Tabqat*, (E. & D.), Vol. V, p. 454.

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*For details see J.A.S.B., Vol. 56, (1887), pp. 164-67; *Annals and Antiquties of Rajasthan* by Tod, Vol. II, p. 27; J.A.S.B., Vol. 67 (1888), pp. 71-75.

Name of the Lady	*Relationship*	*Sources*
5. Jagat Gosain or Jodh Bai. Name Mani Bai	Daughter of Udai Singh (Mota Raja) son of Raja Maldeo. Married to Jahangir in 1586 A.D.	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 19; *Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 310; *History of Rajputana*, Vol. IV, Part I, (Jodhpur State) by G.H. Ojha, p. 358.
6. Karamsi	Daughter of Keshava Das Rathor. Married to Jahangir	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 18-19; *Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 310.
7. Name not given.	Daughter of Jagat Singh, eldest son of Man Singh. Married to Jahangir	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 144-45; *Ain.*, Vol. I, p. 310. Beni Prasad, p. 31.
8. Malik-i-Jahan.	Daughter of Kalyan of Jaisalmere. Married to Jahangir.	Beni Prasad, p. 26.
9. Name not given	Daughter of Ram Chand Bandilah. Married to Jahangir in 1609 A.D.	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 160. Beni Prasad, p. 26.
10. Man Bhawati Bai.	Sister of Raja Gaj Singh. Married to Parwez in 1624 A.D.	*Tuzuk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 295.
11. Anup Kunwar	Daughter of Rao Amar Singh, sister's son of Raja Jai Singh. Married to Sulaiman Shikoh.	*History of Shahjahan of Dihli* by B.P. Saksena, p. 319.
12. Name not given.	Daughter of Rup Singh Rathor. Married to Bahadur Shah in 1693 A.D.	Irvine, Vol. I, pp. 141-42.
13. Name not given.	Daughter of Ajit Singh. Married to Farrukh Siyar in 1714 A.D.	K. Khan, p. 738; *Maasir*, Vol. I, p. 321.

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